

**Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children**

**Report on Interviews with  
Returnee Women and Girls in Herat  
Province, Afghanistan**

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## ***Executive Summary***

After being welcomed warmly in Iran in the early 1980s, the Afghan refugee population saw a cooling down of enthusiasm as the fighting in Afghanistan dragged on and the economic situation in Iran deteriorated. The Joint Programme for the Repatriation of Afghan Refugees, which started on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000, was one attempt to 'encourage' Afghan refugees to return. This report is a result of Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children interviews with returnee women and girls. Sixty returnee women and girls from rural areas of Herat were interviewed between July 26<sup>th</sup> and August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

### *Repatriation Process*

Interviewees praised the repatriation process itself, especially the health care. Faced with deteriorating economic conditions and growing racism, family heads saw their choices dwindling and were glad to take advantage of the assistance to repatriate family members. Community members generally appeared glad to have family members, friends and neighbours back after years of absence. It cannot be denied however that years of drought, lack of a formal economy and no end in sight for the factional fighting and human rights abuses in Afghanistan do not create an 'easy' environment for repatriation and rapid reintegration.

### *Details of Interviewees*

The interviewees were recent arrivals in Afghanistan. The average age was roughly 27 years old, with an average of four children each. Most had moved because of fighting and economic difficulties, had spent four years or less in Iran and lived in the marginal districts of Tehran (73%). Women and children who had spent an extended period or most of their lives away from Afghanistan reacted as any people brought from relatively modern to basic living standards would. These individuals found it difficult to envisage a future in a marginalised and war-torn country, afflicted by growing poverty and natural disasters, and ruled by a repressive regime. The reactions ranged from dejection to making plans to return to Iran. This is something which agencies can do little to address except in the form of psychosocial programmes from organisations with relevant expertise. Most interviewees however were glad to be 'home' and wanted to make the best of it.

### *Employment*

Almost the entire sample (97%) had family members in Iran who would support them to a certain extent and expected to be supported by close male relatives. Men had mostly been engaged in construction, well-digging and agricultural labour in Iran. Currently, employment opportunities for men are greatly reduced which means that families headed by marginalised groups e.g. the disabled, women, children, the aged will find it very difficult to secure a livelihood. Interviewees reported that their men were finding it difficult to find casual work because the drought had reduced opportunities in the agricultural sector. Almost the entire group of interviewees (97%) was from landless families. 93% of the sample will rely on close male relatives to provide their living expenses. Some women had been engaged in handicrafts, agriculture and tailoring prior to leaving Afghanistan. Some had become involved in food processing and handicraft production in Iran. A small number of women from vulnerable households indicated that their children had worked in Iran and continued to work in Afghanistan. Around one third had already started or were interested in taking up some sort of work again. This group

was enthusiastically looking forward to assistance from organisations to help them use their skills for income generation.

#### *Shelter*

Most families were staying with relatives while waiting to rebuild their homes, to start building homes on land they had bought or to buy land for building. Not all families had a house or land for construction. In the case of a small number of female-headed households this is a cause for concern.

#### *Health Care*

Access to health care in Iran had been good for most interviewees, with a very small proportion of the sample complaining of differential treatment by health staff. Most women of child-bearing age had had children at home with the help of neighbours, family or birth attendants. As a result of a population control campaign in Iran some women had become aware of the benefits of birth control and had started using contraception. Some of them will continue to use contraception in Afghanistan if available. Around half of the interviewees had already located medical services in their vicinity, although not all were enthusiastic about the quality or cost. Lack of facilities to maintain the same levels of hygiene as families had enjoyed in Iran was creating problems for some interviewees, especially children. These individuals would probably show a great deal of enthusiasm for water and sanitation projects and related health and hygiene education projects.

#### *Education and Literacy*

The majority of the adults and some of the children in the sample were illiterate. Many women did not attend adult literacy classes and half of the girls did not attend school in Iran. None of the interviewees admitted sending daughters to, attending or being aware of home schools in their villages. This situation can be remedied by discreetly raising awareness of the availability of home schools in villages where families are resettling. Boys were being enrolled and sent to school almost as soon as the family arrives. It would seem that since decisions about educating children are taken by male heads of families, time and ease of finding educational facilities, fear of the Taliban ban on female education as well as cost are factors determining access for girls.

#### *Mobility and Dress Code*

Some of the interviewees had had reduced mobility in Iran because of conservative attitudes within the family. Half of the sample had interesting attitudes towards the burqa, feeling that they could be 'better Muslims' and show more respect for their culture in Afghanistan than in Iran. The other half were finding it difficult to deal with the burqa and perceived notions of what was and was not permissible in Taliban controlled Afghanistan. 33% of the women stated flatly that they had little or no mobility in Afghanistan while 52% felt that their mobility was good. Some women and girls indicated that they had been harassed by young boys in relation to their attire.

#### *Organisational Response*

Organisations dealing with the repatriation process have ensured that it runs smoothly and that information is available to all interested agencies. Organisations not directly involved with the repatriation process are not planning any projects to target returnee families per se. Some staff members recognise that returnee women show greater enthusiasm and commitment to income generation projects. This aspect should be more widely acknowledged and used to motivate all women in the community. In addition, it was evident that adolescent girls who had grown up in Iran and received education there

were more confident and outspoken than their counterparts in Afghanistan. It is vital that these qualities be utilised by agencies for child to child health education and similar projects.

Many organisations working in Herat province are currently engaged in longer term integrated community development programmes and projects to offset the impact of the drought thereby deterring migration from rural areas. The drought and steady trickle of internally displaced from chronic poverty areas such as Ghor were therefore of greater concern to the local authorities than returnee families from Iran.

This report provides interesting information which can be used as baseline material. By sharing it the Women's Commission hopes to contribute to the process of interagency information sharing on Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

## ***Recommendations***

- Some women show great enthusiasm and willingness to use their skills, new and old, in order to supplement family income but lack money to buy equipment or raw materials. These women are often from female-headed or vulnerable households. Agencies should attempt to find and support these women to help them set up small businesses.
- In order to allow families and communities to benefit from the skills of women who show an interest in work, agencies collecting information in communities with substantial number of returnees could set up and contribute to a database of skilled women in the community.
- Since so many women and children are affected by the hygiene situation in their villages it would seem natural that they would be good advocates of improved hygiene conditions and health education messages. Agencies involved in related activities should take advantage of the opportunity of using suitable children and adolescents from returnee families for child to child health education and other similar projects.
- Many women using contraception in Iran will continue to seek contraception in Afghanistan. Discreet efforts should be made to ensure that contraception available is 'safe', prescribed and used appropriately.
- Organisations should ensure that community leaders take responsibility for discriminatory behaviour or harassment of women and girls wearing chador siyah instead of the burqa by young boys.
- There are a number of girls who have received a certain level of education in Iran, are confident and eloquent and at times engaged in teaching siblings at home. Such girls should be encouraged to continue through provision of educational material and incorporated into local home school facilities as teachers' assistants. While remaining mindful of current restrictions and dangers, their potential as assets for the community and as role models for other girls should be exploited.
- Since education for girls may not always be a family priority discreet ways should be found to inform male or female heads of returnee families of the availability and location of home schools for girls in their vicinity.
- A small number of widows, female-headed and vulnerable households will have their own homes to return to. But there are a number of these households who have no house, no land and no fixed idea of where they will live since they will be reliant on the charity of relatives and the community. Targeting the real vulnerable cases is not easy but attempts should be made as such households, especially those headed by women, are in dire need of extra support.
- There is very little that agencies can do to alleviate the difficulties experienced by women and children settling back into rural communities. It is unrealistic to expect any agency to bring running water, electricity or parks to villages in Afghanistan. Taliban restrictions banning TV and women's pilgrimages do not alleviate the



situation for returnees who are faced with very limited opportunities for entertainment. Agencies with experience and skills in the area of psychosocial programming should design interventions targeting returnee women and children who are having particular difficulties reintegrating into their seed communities. Since there is generally a marked difference in attitudes and reactions according to the number of years returnees spent in Iran such factors should be taken into account during programme design.

- Since information collection in relation to women of any category is logistically challenging in Afghanistan it is vital that any information about women or any gender disaggregated data be shared among all agencies. In the case of returnee women such information should be disseminated as reference material to agencies working with returnee groups all over Afghanistan and should not be treated as location-specific.
- Opportunities presented for information collection should be seized as and when they arise. For example, agencies with female staff or female consultants, facing no danger in collecting information, should inform other agencies of their intent to study particular women's issues. This gives other agencies an opportunity to broaden the scope of enquiry, offer collaboration and possibly use information collected to inform and improve their own programming with women.
- In relation to refugees and repatriation, information sharing should take place between agencies and NGOs operating in Iran and/or in Afghanistan. This gives agencies on both sides of the border valuable insights and the possibility to check the validity of information collected through triangulation.
- It would be advisable to conduct similar research with returnee women in Herat city and Kabul city since it is to be expected that their experiences and issues will differ from those of the rural women and girls in this report. It is also advisable to conduct similar research with returnee groups returning to areas where there may be ethnic tensions e.g. Hazaras returning to areas with large numbers of Pushtuns.

## **Introduction**

In the early 1980s, during the first few years of the Islamic Revolution, Iran espoused an open border policy in the name of Islamic solidarity and support for the oppressed. The Islamic Republic of Iran was referred to as the *Omu-l-Ghara* – (the safe haven) for all Muslims. As a result, Iran welcomed refugees and granted them permanent residence cards, commonly known as blue cards, which gave them legal status for their stay in the country. The blue card entitled refugees to live and work<sup>1</sup> in Iran and to have access to schooling and health care.

The 1990s saw a worsening domestic situation in Iran and deteriorating economic conditions. Blue cards were no longer issued and, in 1994, they were replaced with white cards, which had to be renewed every three months. These finally expired in 1996. Many blue cardholders lost their legal status due to frequent ad hoc confiscation of residence permits. There were periods of sudden deportation and refugees were used as scapegoats in relation to government failure at adequately dealing with issues such as drug trafficking and unemployment. Iranian Labour Minister Hoseyn Kamali recently stated that there were 2 million Afghans working illegally in Iran and that “those people must leave our country and give our young people the opportunity to find jobs” (IRIN 2000). As one Iranian consultant put it, however:

“Whether the Iranians are ready to accept the extremely limited menial jobs presently occupied by Afghans is, of course, another question altogether.” (Amiri 1999, p.7)

Apart from valid complaints in relation to lack of international assistance made available to deal with the sizeable refugee population in a country struggling with economic crisis, there is little evidence backing the arguments used by the Iranian government to justify large-scale repatriation of Afghan refugees. Against this backdrop of rising tension and dwindling choices, the Joint Programme for the repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran came into effect on April 8<sup>th</sup> 2000. This programme facilitated ‘voluntary’ return of Afghan refugees by providing assistance to repatriating families. Those who felt that their lives would be in danger if returned to Afghanistan were allowed to appeal for reconsideration of their case. By July 25 United Nations weekly reports said that the total number of returnees since the beginning of the Joint Programme had reached 55,003.

The Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children has been involved with Afghan communities since the early 90s and set up a project office in Peshawar in April 2000. The project provides technical gender advice and resources to the aid community upon request. In this period, agencies working with the repatriation process proposed that the Gender Technical Advisor be sent from the Peshawar Office to interview women and girls who had been repatriated to Herat. This was in order to ascertain whether gender considerations had been adequately accommodated during the repatriation process and to assess any specific needs of new arrivals.

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<sup>1</sup> Limited to a number of categories all involving hard or menial labour.

## **Methodology**

The interviews on which this report is based were carried out in the period between July 26<sup>th</sup> and August 7<sup>th</sup>. As mentioned above, the Gender Technical Advisor carried out the information collection for this survey. The Advisor is a fluent Dari speaker, reducing the possibility of misinterpretation and avoiding difficulties related to finding and hiring a female interpreter. The Advisor is also familiar with work in the Afghan context, having worked in Afghanistan for a number of years. The information was collected by means of in-depth interviews based on the checklists in Appendix A. The UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Form questionnaire was based on a similar set of issues as the checklist used for the in-depth interviews. This is useful in that allows some comparison to take place between information presented by men with that presented by women.

UNHCR had lists of family groups in various villages and these lists were being used to distribute tools for the reconstruction of houses. The advisor decided to follow the distribution teams in order to locate families and find female family members. She found that many men had come without their families in order to assess the situation and/or start rebuilding homes before their families arrived. The advisor ended up driving to different districts and different villages, and simply asking individuals whether they knew of any returnee women and girls living there. This meant that sampling was 'random'. The advisor continued searching villages until the end of her trip and in this manner sixty women and girls were interviewed. This sample size is small but the in-depth nature of the interviews conducted means that the value of the information is more in quality rather than quantity. The advisor also interviewed individuals from Taliban Ministries and various organisations to ascertain whether there would be any specific assistance for returnee families.

During analysis of the qualitative and especially quantitative data a pattern emerged. There were marked similarities between women and girls who had spent a certain amount of time in Iran. As a result the data on the sample has been presented as a whole and also divided according to these 'year' groupings. During the interviews it became evident that there were one group of households which were female headed or vulnerable because the male head was too old, too young, absent, or disabled. Throughout this report this group is referred to directly or abbreviated to FHH. Wherever applicable the data has been presented separately for married women, the FHH group and for girls aged sixteen years or less.

### **Problems**

- Finding female members of returnee families proved time-consuming as they could not be located easily through UNHCR's lists. Communities could have been reluctant to reveal the whereabouts of families due to suspicion or lack of information.
- Even with an introduction giving identity, organisation and reasons behind the interviews, women were suspicious and assumed that the advisor was 'checking up' on them. As a result, some women were guarded in answering certain questions e.g. whether male relatives would return to Iran to find work.
- As a Shi'ite Muslim of Iranian origin, the advisor felt that it was inadvisable to delve into people's religious and ethnic backgrounds as the conclusions drawn by respondents and the community may have been negative.
- Time constraints and other factors, mentioned elsewhere in this report, meant that the advisor did not interview members of 'seed' communities. Information given in the section on Seed Communities is based on brief exchanges and on observation.

## ***The Information in this Report***

The narrative section of this report presents information collected from the interviews as well as some background information from secondary materials. This report contains 31 tables (11 simplified tables in the narrative section and 20 detailed ones in the appendices) on a number of topics discussed with interviewees. The appendices provide additional information collected during the trip on the situation of the internally displaced and the work of some key organisations in Herat not directly involved with the repatriation process. The narrative section also contains 24 boxes containing responses from women and girls on the topics discussed. These quotes 'flesh out' the quantitative data collected and add depth to the material in this report.

## ***Details of Sample***

### Sample Composition

The sample consists solely of women from villages in Herat province. The background of all interviewees is therefore rural. Since the advisor avoided asking questions on ethnic group and religious sect, the ethnicity of the interviewees is unclear but all were fluent Dari speakers therefore it can safely be assumed that they were Tajik or Farsiwan<sup>2</sup>. No Hazaras were interviewed and one family were possibly of Turkmen origin. There were 15 children in the sample, aged 16 years and below. One group of women (18% of the sample) is referred to as the Female Headed Household (FHH) group. This is not strictly true in every case since some women's husbands were still alive but could not be counted as 'able bodied men'. Of the women in this category (See Table 14):

- one was married to a disabled man who could manage a small amount of light work,
- three had very old husbands who could hardly work,
- one had a husband who was paralysed,
- one woman's husband had run away since his repatriation due to political reasons<sup>3</sup>,
- four women were widowed before they went to Iran, and
- one woman's husband had died in Iran.

Of great note during the interview process were some of the adolescent girls. A number of these had received some education and demonstrated confidence, eloquence and understanding which outshone that of their elders and their peers who had been brought up in Afghanistan. They had no difficulty understanding what was being discussed and showed no hesitation in answering questions or stating their opinions. It is the opinion of the advisor that this group is a very valuable resource who should be utilised not only because of their usefulness to aid agencies but as role models for girls of a similar age in the community.

There was one pregnant woman in this sample. The reason she gave for not delaying her repatriation was that her family was afraid that the assistance would run out and they would be forced to pay for their transport costs. There were no unaccompanied women or children in the sample. It would appear that few such cases were detected during the repatriation process as a whole.

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<sup>2</sup> Farsi speakers of Pushtu origin.

<sup>3</sup> She did not know of his whereabouts and had had no word from him.

### Duration of Repatriation in Afghanistan

Just over half of the interviewees (57%) had been back in Afghanistan from anywhere between two weeks and one month (See Table 1). This factor should be taken into consideration when reviewing answers in relation to feelings about being back in Afghanistan as in many cases interviewees were still 'finding their feet' in Afghanistan at the time of the interviews. This does not imply that the feelings of interviewees with strong negative reactions always wear off in time however. None of the women or girls indicated that their families would be moving elsewhere at any stage.

**Table 1 Period of Return to Afghanistan**

Period	Married	FHH	Child	Total %
<=1/2 month	7%	0%	8%	15%
>1/2 <= 1 month	30%	15%	12%	57%
>1 <=4 months	20%	3%	5%	28%

### Age Composition of Sample (See Table 12)

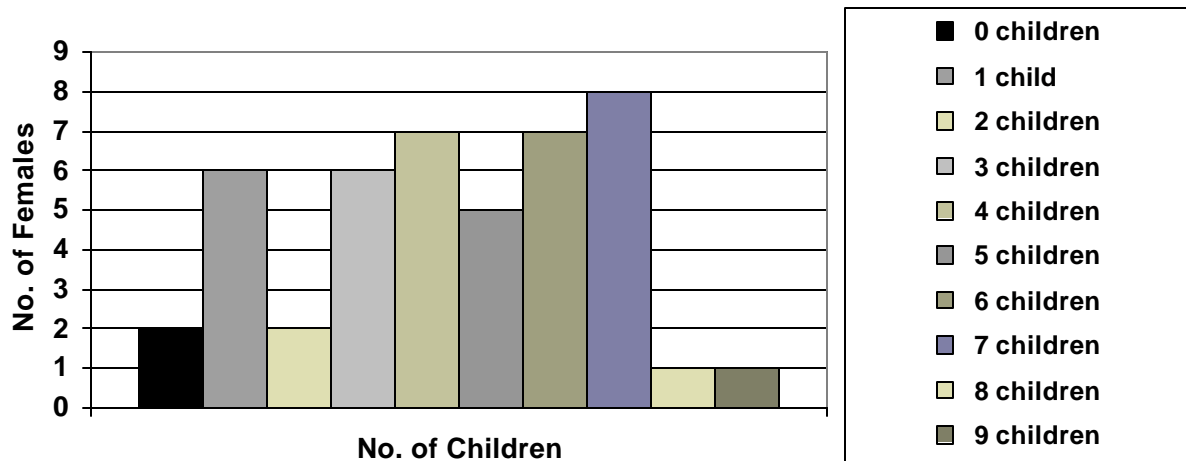
Like many people in rural areas of Afghanistan, many of the women could only give an approximate age. Most of the girls, however, were very specific about their age. The highest percentage of the sample was in the 26-30 year old category (18%). There was no marked difference in age composition according to emigration periods. The average age among children was 12.2 years, among the women 31.4 years and for the sample as a whole 26.6 years.

**Table 2 Age Composition of Sample**

Age groups	% of sample (Married)	% of sample (FHH)	% of sample (Children)	Total %
9-10 yrs			10%	10%
11-12 yrs			3%	3%
13-14 yrs			5%	5%
15-16 yrs			7%	7%
17-20	12%			12%
21-25	7%			7%
26-30	13%	5%		18%
31-35	10%	5%		15%
36-40	12%	3%		15%
41-60	3%	5%		8%

### Number of Children per Woman (See Table 13)

Between them, the women in the sample had 196 children, 99 boys and 97 girls. This gives an average of four children per woman. Figure 1 gives information on number of children for women of child bearing age in the sample. It shows that women of child bearing age in the sample have anywhere between four and seven children. Women with three children or less were generally young or newly wed. A small number of women had eight or more children.



**Figure 1 Number of Children per Females of Child Bearing Age**

### ***Emigration to Iran***

#### Reasons for Moving to Iran

A variety of reasons were given for leaving Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, outbreak of severe fighting during the Communist period, the escalation of the civil war and the arrival of the Taliban all sparked off waves of migration. Many people left in search of better livelihoods since they could no longer sustain their families in Afghanistan. There seemed to be indications that men would go first, set up some sort of base and then move their families over en masse – many men and women had taken parents, grandparents and other relatives with them to Iran. A BAFIA<sup>4</sup> survey from 1991 found that only around 21% of Afghans in Iran were women whereas a 1999 study using official sources put women refugees at 45% of the total refugee population, with 52% of these being children under the age of 15 (Amiri 1999). One reason for this change in statistics may be the gradual rise in the number of families moving to join male relatives working in Iran. The widows in the sample had gone to Iran with members of their extended family, “just to see what life was like over there”, as one woman put it.

### **Box 1 Reasons Given for Migration to Iran**

- ❖ “My husband was a fighter. He was beaten badly by the Taliban here so we ran away.”
- ❖ “A rocket fell on house so we escaped. We were afraid of Taliban so we didn’t come back sooner.”
- ❖ “We left because of the war but we came back after a while and when the Taliban first came, our husbands were arrested and beaten up.”
- ❖ “My husband’s leg was paralysed so we went to Iran to get it fixed.”

<sup>4</sup> Iran’s Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs

- ❖ “The men were all working in Iran and wanted their women and children there with them.”
- ❖ “I was married at seven and had my first baby at 16. My husband was a *Mujahid*<sup>5</sup> and he got killed. I went to Iran with my family. They were going so I thought ‘why not?’”

#### Number of Years in Iran

Around 60% of the sample spent 4 years or less in Iran, 20% spent between 4 and 8 years in Iran and 20% spent 8 years or more in Iran (See Table 15).

**Table 3 Proportion of Life Spent in Iran**

Proportion of Life	No.	%
Up to quarter of their life	42	70%
Quarter to one half of life	10	17%
One half to three quarters of life	3	5%
Three quarters to whole life	5	8%

#### Breakdown by ‘year’ group:

Percentage of year group as opposed to whole sample

- Less than 4 years in Iran: Composition 64% married women, 22% children and 14% FHH.
- Between 4 and 8 years in Iran: Composition 58% married women, 25% children and 17% FHH.
- More than 8 years in Iran: Composition 33.3% married women, 33.3% children and 33.3% FHH.

#### Location in Iran

Some women had moved from one town to another at least once but they were in the minority. Most women left villages around Herat and went to join settled family groups and did not move once they had settled in. Of the sample 12% had been in Karaj, on the outskirts of Tehran, 73% in Varamin and other marginal districts of Tehran, Qom 2%, Mashhad 5% and Esfahan 8%. (See Table 16). None of the sample had gone to live in villages in Iran.

Those in Esfahan were among the early refugees having been there for ten years or more. Qom is a town renowned for its *madrasahs*<sup>6</sup> and pilgrimage sites. It is not an obvious location for refugees. Judging by assets and clothing etc., the family returnee from Qom were very wealthy and involved in the carpet trade. There seems to be an indication that those living in the marginal districts of Tehran are mostly recent arrivals who have been in Iran for five years or less. 56% of the sample fit this category. None of those who had arrived in Iran less than four years ago had settled in Esfahan or Mashhad, which can be considered larger provincial towns.

<sup>5</sup> Mujahid – fighter in the jihad or holy war, term used to refer to those engaged in the ‘holy war’ against the troops of the Communist government and invading Soviet troops.

<sup>6</sup> Madrasah – religious seminary

### **Breakdown by 'year' group:**

Percentage of year group as opposed to whole sample

- Less than 4 years in Iran: 8% Karaj, 50% Varamin and outskirts of Tehran, Qom 2%
- Between 4 and 8 years in Iran: 4% Karaj, 13% Varamin and outskirts of Tehran, Mashhad 3%
- More than 8 years in Iran: 10% Varamin and outskirts of Tehran, Mashhad 2% and Esfahan 8%

### ***Repatriation from Iran to Afghanistan***

#### Treatment during Repatriation Process

95% of interviewees described the repatriation process as excellent, while 5% said it was good. Interviewees said that agency staff on both sides of the border had tried their utmost to ensure that all necessary assistance was available for those who were being repatriated.

Many women praised the health care available during the repatriation process<sup>7</sup>. UNHCR, IOM, MDM and IRC supported by WHO and UNICEF work on the Afghanistan side of the border, while UNHCR and MSF France operate on the Iranian side. Availability of treatment starts from Zero-Point at the border, the moment returnees cross the border in Islam Qala, and ends where returnees get on transport to go to their places of origin. Female staff are not on hand at Islam Qala due to Taliban restrictions but this does not seem to have caused too many difficulties. Female staff are available at the transit camp. Pregnant women, if and when detected<sup>8</sup>, and others in need of medical attention are transported in more comfortable transportation from Zero Point. The medical staff are on the look out for vulnerable and potentially serious cases to make sure that they receive advice, medication or referrals, ensuring the least discomfort during their repatriation (Lumpp 2000).

#### Information on Afghanistan Prior to Repatriation

Women and girls found out about the Joint Programme through a variety of media, mostly television (See Table 4 below). Although information provision on the actual process of repatriation was good, many women and girls were not aware of the situation in Afghanistan. As one woman commented wryly: "They didn't tell us that there was a drought here and they didn't show the way the Taliban treat people on TV."

**Table 4 Media through which women and girls became aware of the repatriation process**

<b>Medium</b>	<b>% of Sample</b>
Family members	7%
Newspapers	7%

<sup>7</sup> One woman felt obliged to have most of the examinations and to take any medication that was on offer since she did not wish to miss out on any part of the repatriation package!

<sup>8</sup> Pregnant women are advised by medical staff in screening centres in Iran to avoid the journey from Iran to Afghanistan but seem eager to try and conceal their condition in order to join the repatriation process.



Those opting for repatriation	12%
Radio	3%
TV	65%
Various	5%
UN pamphlet	1%
Total	100%

### WFP Wheat

In the sample 94% were eating or had eaten the WFP wheat allocation of their repatriation package. 2% had not started eating the wheat yet because they were still enjoying a 'guest period' with family members and 2% lost their card and therefore their entitlement to the WFP wheat portion of the repatriation package. 2% were going to donate part of the wheat to poor family members in Afghanistan and sell the rest to return to Iran.

### Reasons for Repatriation

In the preliminary assessment of returnees carried out by UNHCR with male family members reasons for return were given as "fear of deportation after the Joint Programme", "family reunification", "UNHCR assistance (some indicated they could otherwise not have afforded repatriation)", "coming home", and "visiting Afghanistan".

Women gave similar answers to men. In the majority of cases, there was no implication or blunt statement that Afghan refugees were forced to repatriate but there was a distinct impression that families felt they had no choice in the matter. Many families seem to fear the end of assistance and forced deportation, which many cannot afford. As a result they took the opportunity offered by assisted repatriation to bring women and children back to Afghanistan. In addition, with clampdowns on illegal aliens and economic problems in Iran leading to inflation, women explained how male family members were struggling to find jobs and to support their families with their meagre earnings. This situation was worse for the small number of women heading families. There were also comments about animosity and verbal harassment from Iranians. This usually seemed to take place in the bakers' queues where people's dissatisfaction with issues usually emerges in the form of heckling and heated discussions<sup>9</sup>.

Indications of racism against Afghans came from comments about children's attitudes. Some families mentioned that children did not tell classmates or playmates that they were Afghan and were quite distressed about the possibility of their true identity being discovered. There was also mention of Iranian teachers pretending that Afghan students were Iranian in order to avoid tension. Some women also complained about the attitudes of Iranian health staff when they discovered that the patient was Afghan. It would seem that those who can, pretend that they are Iranian to escape verbal harassment. Fortunately, this sort of mistreatment does not apply in every case and some Afghans managed to form good relationships with Iranian neighbours.

It was evident that the decision to move was made by male family heads, at times supported by the women in the family. For FHHs it was unclear although one woman

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, at the height of the Yugoslav conflict complaints in the bread queue usually focused on the amount of funds the Iranian government was diverting to help the people of Bosnia Herzegovina.

mentioned that her brother-in-law had decided to send her whereas another woman indicated that rising prices had convinced her that it was time to move. It would be difficult for agencies to detect or get involved with the dynamics of families where females family members are repatriating against their will.

## Box 2 Repatriation

- ❖ “Three years ago my husband died in Iran, and my brother-in law brought me back.”
- ❖ “We heard that Afghans will be thrown out and that there is peace in Afghanistan.”
- ❖ “They said they’d throw us out so I decided to come myself. Life was not going anywhere so we decided to move.”
- ❖ “There was no one to help me and the rent went up so I thought it might be better to come back. I thought about it and knew I couldn’t afford to be deported.”
- ❖ “Men were sometimes grabbed off the street, women weren’t.”
- ❖ “Iranian people are very kind and if we didn’t have to we would have stayed forever.”
- ❖ “It became too expensive to live in Iran.”
- ❖ “Whatever our husbands made was spent in Iran so we came back. Our men were working very hard and couldn’t make ends meet. On TV they said that the UN would pay for transport costs.”
- ❖ “People said a lot of horrible things about Afghans.”
- ❖ “People in Iran told us that conditions are not good for women in Afghanistan but we left anyway.”
- ❖ “My Iranian neighbours told me that life in Afghanistan was expensive and that I shouldn’t go.”
- ❖ “We left out of fear of being arrested. My husband was arrested and I was left defenceless. People used to swear at us when we when we went to buy bread at the bakery. Afghanistan is cheaper to live in. Iran was good, but this is our country.”

### Attitudes to Repatriation in Afghanistan

Many women expressed genuine relief at being back in their own country. Women are happy to see relatives and neighbours they left behind. Some children reported being happy to see grandparents again. Naturally, some women expected to come back and find life in Afghanistan as they had left it and, in some cases, their rude awakening makes them regret their decision to return. Women and children miss the television, and modern conveniences such as electricity, running water and water heaters. Women who enjoyed relatively good mobility in Iran enjoyed the opportunity to go to parks, picnics and pilgrimage sites. Although women all over Afghanistan generally complain about lowered standards of living because of the war and difficulties under the Taliban’s strict

regime, some of the interviewees were extremely anxious about their future in Afghanistan and how they would find ways to cope with their new life:

### **Box 3 One woman's reaction to her new life**

- ❖ "From the night I went to sleep in the tent in the transit camp I was dead. Iran is a real country. If you die in the street here, no one cares. Here in Afghanistan rich people count and the poor die. My girls don't like the dust and dirt here and they're crying a lot. I'm going to run away. I've been here one month and I can't tolerate a second month. I will tell people to make a revolution and not come back. It would be more humane to kill all the Afghan refugees rather than to send them back here. Thieves came and robbed my relatives' house the other night and now I'm frightened to even go to the toilet. I am Shi'ite and I don't feel safe in this village because they are all Sunni."

Among the returnees there will be families who cannot conceive starting life again in Afghanistan under the current circumstances. These people generally try to hide their Afghan identity in order to stay in Iran. In the sample of interviewees there was one such woman who spoke with an Iranian accent and admitted that she and her children try to hide the fact that they are Afghan:

### **Box 4 One woman's story**

- ❖ "My husband was paralysed from the waist down after an accident at work. It's 3 years and 10 months that he's disabled. I was depressed and thought I'd come for a holiday but I won't stay. My husband knows that because he is disabled he will never make a living in Afghanistan. People from my children's school got suspicious because they were always coming to school late and they came to the house. When they saw the situation they started helping us out with money, food and clothes. It's difficult with a disabled husband and 5 kids. I can't imagine coming back here because of the father of the children, everyone is poor here and we have no land and no one will give anything to anyone else here. My 9year-old daughter is very depressed here and misses her father and brothers. My daughter thought Afghanistan meant her grandparents' house so she was happy. When we are in Iran she hates being called Afghan because she says that other children won't play with her. We'd like to have a quiet country we can live in like everyone else but God doesn't want it."

The process has been disorienting for very small children but this is to be expected. Many women and girls commented that older children miss all the various types of child-specific entertainment such as parks, television programmes for children, sweets and soft drinks and for some school studies, friends and teachers. Children may have been subjected to racism in Iran but for some, in Afghanistan they are outsiders too. Children also miss relatives they left behind in Iran. Many mothers reported the difficulty children were having dealing with the dirt and unhygienic conditions. Children dislike the dust and wind in Herat and many dislike using traditional pit latrines and bathing facilities.

### **Box 5 Attitudes to Repatriation**

- ❖ “The children are bored here because there are no parks, no ice cream, and no drinks. They are trying to adapt here.”
- ❖ “My smallest daughter keeps saying <<When are we going home? >>”
- ❖ “The children don’t like the dust and wind and they are all ill since we came back. The children really wanted to come back but now they complain about the dust and dirt. I’m really quite happy to be back.”
- ❖ “I really miss the parks. I miss school and my teachers. I don’t know which one I like more, Iran or Afghanistan.”
- ❖ “The saddest thing was that we had to sell our television. There is no difference between Iran and Afghanistan. At least we have our relatives here.”
- ❖ “Our little kids hate it here. There’s no TV and no amusement for children. The drought is a problem, cooking is a problem. It’s our country.”
- ❖ “Even being far from the family in Afghanistan, we’re happier there. I miss TV and sometimes the park. We would like our own country to improve.”
- ❖ “When I was in Iran, I wanted to come but now that I’m here I want to go back.”
- ❖ “I miss the teacher and my Iranian playmates, and the park. I haven’t found playmates. There’s no television watching. People treat us differently. I can’t wash and I feel dirty all the time.”
- ❖ “All the kids are sick since we got back, they’ve all lost weight and they don’t want to play or go out or anything. They don’t want to make friends; they say the kids are dirty. They’re depressed and say they want to go back to Iran. Kids can’t cope with all the dirt here.”
- ❖ “Whether we are happy to be back or not, it’s our own country.”
- ❖ “Iran was very green and I miss that. I had grown a patch of barley outside my window in Iran so I could have something green to look at.”

## ***Livelihood***

### **Support from Family Members in Iran**

97% of the sample had family members still living and working in Iran. The interviewees were reluctant or vague in disclosing whether these family members were supporting them in any way. A few women mentioned husbands or sons returning to Iran to seek employment or to take up previous jobs.

### **Support and Livelihood Provision in Afghanistan (See Table 17)**

All married women expected to be financially supported by their husbands (97%) or sons (3%). Among the girls interviewed, 53% would rely on their father for their expenses, 27% on brothers, 7% on brother-in-laws and 13% on fathers and brothers. 18% of women in FHH will still rely on their husband, 9% on their husband and themselves, 27% on their sons and themselves, 9% on son-in-laws, 27% on sons, and 9% on charity and

themselves. Of the entire sample, 93% will be relying on close male relatives to provide their living expenses. 7% of the entire sample will rely partially on males for a contribution to the family income, 9% will partially rely on their own efforts and 2% partially on charity contributions from the local community.

Many men had been trying to find work with little or no success in Herat province. This situation has been exacerbated by the marginalisation of Afghanistan from the world economy, the drought affecting agriculture, and the influx of internally displaced from poorer provinces, seeking assistance and opportunities for work. Involvement in existing economic activities would require access to the groups operating the networks. These would involve drug smuggling across the Iranian border, the transit trade from Iran and Turkmenistan, the carpet business, and smuggling antiquities. These activities are generally operated by powerful families and employment opportunities are determined by having the right connections. Most were looking for work involving heavy manual labour. A small number had the possibility to be street vendors or to find other employment related to work prior to leaving Afghanistan e.g. driver, rope maker. A small number of women said sons or relatives might try to return to Iran to find work. Evidently families with disabled, women or young household heads will find it difficult to get by in the current situation.

#### **Box 6 Women on the work of male relatives**

- ❖ “My husband pushes a cart now.”
- ❖ “My husband was a driver before we left Afghanistan and if God is kind maybe he will find work as a driver again.”
- ❖ “My husband collects fuel and goes around by bicycle selling it because he hasn’t found a job yet. We’ve been back for two months.”
- ❖ “My husband and sons are busy building our house and so they haven’t gone looking for work yet.”
- ❖ “My husband might go back to Iran.”
- ❖ “My brother and brother-in-law will try to go back and work in Iran. They worked in a mosaic factory.”
- ❖ “My husband has sciatic problems. He did guard work and work that did not involve physical labour. He is trying to help our sons with farming. He doesn’t have access to irrigation water rights because he couldn’t contribute to the well digging.”
- ❖ “My husband is labourer and is still in Iran. When he comes he will go back to Iran again.”
- ❖ “My husband had a fruit shop before we left for Iran and is now selling ropes in Herat.”

#### **Women’s Paid Work in Afghanistan Prior to Migration**

Some women had been engaged in ‘skilled’ work before leaving Afghanistan. Some were involved in agricultural labour or menial tasks. Many did not find any opportunities to continue their work in Iran due to various reasons e.g. inability to purchase raw materials or equipment necessary. Some skills such as tailoring enabled some women

to supplement the family income or to clothe themselves, their children and extended family.

### Box 7 Work in Afghanistan

- ❖ “I have been tailoring for 20 years.”
- ❖ “I used to make ropes before I left Afghanistan but now I have children to look after.”
- ❖ “My mother was washing clothes and baking bread in Afghanistan but now she is too old and weak.”
- ❖ “I used to help with the farming work before leaving Afghanistan.”
- ❖ “I used to make carpets before I went to Iran but couldn’t afford the equipment in Iran and now my eyes are too weak.”

### Paid Work for Refugee Women in Iran (See Table 18)

60% of the sample did no paid work during their stay in Iran (Table 5). For many women this was the result of conservative attitudes from male and older female family members who did not want them to go out and to have contact with Iranians and Afghans outside the extended family. Adherence to traditional gender roles means that for most Afghan families it is shameful for women to be the family breadwinner or to contribute to the family income<sup>10</sup>. This attitude is also reflected in some interpretations of Quranic verses. Many other factors work in concert to affect attitudes to women’s work e.g. ethnic group, rural/urban background, level of education, class and number of years as a refugee.

Women reported being involved in a range of activities such as making ice cream, shelling pistachios, carpet weaving, sorting wool, cleaning vegetables, tailoring, knitting, etc. Some women managed to find jobs as cleaners although mobility restrictions meant that very few women opted for such employment. For some women cleaning vegetables meant that they had to travel to the farms and for others, from conservative families, their male relatives would bring vegetables, pistachios or wool home for them to clean. Some women were able to develop some entrepreneurial skills through marketing their own goods and skills. Some young girls and women learnt carpet weaving in Iran. Women’s earnings were generally very low ranging from 12-60% of the minimum wage (Amiri 1999).

**Table 5 Type of work carried out by women and girls in Iran**

Type of Work	No. of women/girls	% of sample
Carpet and kilim weaving	4	7%
Food processing	12	20%

<sup>10</sup> Even in the face of the present economic situation in Afghanistan some families insist on adhering to such cultural norms. Some families reluctantly allow women to be breadwinners while expecting them to continue performing their traditional gender roles and not demanding an improvement in status.

Various	2	3%
Knitting	1	2%
No paid work	36	60%
Tailoring	2	3%
Wash clothes	3	5%

Of the married group 59% did no work, 12% were involved in food processing, 12% wove kilims and carpets, 9% did menial work such as washing clothes and 9% did tailoring or knitting. Of the FHH group 36% did no work, 55% were involved in food processing and 9% did tailoring or knitting. Of the child group 73% did no work, 20% were involved in food processing activities and 7% were involved in kilim and carpet weaving. More women from vulnerable households had to work in order to supplement family income. Girls involved in food processing were all part of vulnerable households and assisted their mothers.

### Breakdown by 'year' group:

Percentage of year group as opposed to whole sample

- Of those who had been in Iran for four years or less 58% did nothing and 19% were involved in food processing. In this year group 65% of the married group did no work, 60% of the FHH group worked in food processing and 20% did not work and 63% of the child group did no work.
- Of the 4-8 year group 50% did nothing, 42% were involved in food processing and 8% in tailoring or knitting. There was no carpet or kilim weaving or washing clothes etc. in this group. 57% of the married group did nothing. 100% of the FHH group was involved in food processing and 67% of the children did nothing while 33% were involved in food processing.
- Of the 8 years or more group 67% did nothing, 17% were involved in kilim and carpet weaving and none did menial work such as washing clothes. 25% of the married group did nothing while 50% wove kilims or carpets, 75% of the FHH group did nothing while 25% were involved in food processing. 100% of the children in this group did nothing.

In this sample, it would seem that married women were more likely to work the longer they had been in Iran. It would also appear that those who had been in Iran for a longer period of time were less likely to do food processing work and would engage in more diverse forms of paid employment. Interestingly, less women from vulnerable households who had been in Iran for more than eight years worked. This could be due to access to, familiarity with and willingness to use larger social networks through which they could receive charity from members of the Iranian community.

### Box 8 Work in Iran

- ❖ "I used to knit garments and take them and sell them myself."
- ❖ "My husband and I cleaned an Iranian man's house and he gave us a free place to stay."

- ❖ “I learnt how to weave carpets in silk. I was paid relatively good wages and I would do it again here if it was available.”
- ❖ “I used to clean beetroots and shell pistachios, and many people used to give me stuff out of charity.”

### Paid Work for Returnee Women (See Table 19)

Many women accept the conservative attitudes of their men folk and families. They profess no interest in work. In spite of this, 30% of the women and girls interviewed are already working or would like to find some work opportunity in Afghanistan. Of this group, 79% are illiterate, 89% did not study in Iran, 68% have been back for less than one month, 74% worked in Iran, and 84% were in Iran for less than five years. 36% of married women, 36% of female headed or vulnerable households and 20% of children are already engaged in some form of paid work or would be interested to work in Afghanistan. Through their discussions, it was obvious that some women had developed very creative attitudes and were looking at ways in which they could work under the current restrictive circumstances in Afghanistan.

Women who spent a smaller number of years in Iran are more willing to work in Afghanistan. This may be because they are more willing to accept the limited types of paid work available. Some women have opted for employment such as wool sorting, which in a carpet producing area such as Herat province is easily available though labour intensive. Some women would like to continue their work here but have difficulty finding the money to buy raw materials and equipment. Many women carpet weavers are in this category. Some women, more especially those from female-headed and vulnerable households show a willingness to try and market skills they picked up in Iran e.g. hair dressing.

### Box 9 Work in Afghanistan

- ❖ “I clean and sort wool here.”
- ❖ “Now I would knit if I could find the materials.”
- ❖ “I will do tailoring and I learnt how to do injections and hair cuts from a lady I worked with in Iran. I can do that sort of stuff here.”
- ❖ “I collect dung and make cakes and my son sells them in Herat. I also bake bread and wash clothes for other people.”
- ❖ “I wanted to rent a shop in the village and sell groceries but a man got the shop instead. I wasn't worried about the Taliban; I would have sorted them out myself and I would have managed with the rent somehow. The village headman knows me and he knows I'm a widow. I wash clothes and make bread. I know I'm illiterate but I could work in the community for the UN and other NGOs who come to work in the village.”
- ❖ “My husband doesn't like me to work. Women should just do housework.”
- ❖ “It's not our custom that women should go out and do any sort of work. Our men won't allow it.”



### Paid work for refugee Men in Iran

Many of the men who migrated to Iran were engaged as casual agricultural labour in Afghanistan and sought similar work in Iran. Most women said that their husbands were engaged in construction labour and some in agricultural labour in Iran. Well-digging seemed to be the most common form of manual labour available. Those with disabilities managed to find work as security guards. Males who grew up in Iran can find work as petty traders or working for other traders.

### Box 10 Women on men's work in Iran

- ❖ "Most of my male relatives have lost limbs to land mines. My husband lost a leg so he could only work as a guard or sold stuff on a tray. He still sells stuff on a tray here in Afghanistan."
- ❖ "My son still works as a curtain maker in Iran."
- ❖ "My husband used to dig wells in Iran."
- ❖ "Well digging spoilt my husband's joints."

### Working Children (See Table 20)

13% of women said that their children were working in Iran. 67% of these women were widows or had husbands too old to work and 33% were married. Half had been in Iran for four or five years whereas the other half had been in Iran for anywhere between seven and seventeen years. Half of these women were working. All had between four and six children and all were aged thirty to forty five. The results would indicate that children of new arrivals were more likely to work than children of long-term refugees. The children were engaged in food processing activities along with their mothers or sold snacks on the streets. These children continue to work in Afghanistan, collecting fuel from the hills, boys engaged as labourers and girls helping their mother with wool sorting, washing clothes or baking bread.

### Box 11 Working Children

- ❖ "One of my sons used to sell snacks on the street in Iran. The eldest brings bushes by donkey and sells them in Herat now."
- ❖ "My children used to sort rubbish and sell it in Iran. I used to take my girls to work on the farm cleaning beetroots sometimes. Now my boy collects fuel and sells it in Herat."

### Land

Only 3% of the sample mentioned having land which their relatives could farm. 97% were from landless families. Male relatives involved in agricultural work were either

working as labour on the lands of relatives, or as hired agricultural labour. The drought has obviously impacted the availability and profitability of such employment. One family mentioned that because of the father's disability and inability to contribute to the maintenance of the local irrigation canal he was not entitled to use any irrigation water.

## **Health**

Health Care in Iran (See Table 27)

85% of the sample visited an Iranian doctor or were admitted to hospital at least once during their stay in Iran. Most women were aware of doctors and health centres in their area even if they did not use them. There was, however, a decline in the level of health care available to refugees, eventually excluding those who could not afford medical costs:

“...since 1994, with a major reduction of medical subsidies, the curative health care rendered by public hospitals was more or less stopped...This negatively affected the Afghan refugees who were earlier able to go to public hospitals with minimal charges. Particularly the majority of Afghan women were no longer able to have deliveries at the hospitals.” (Amiri p.14, 1999)

An extensive Primary Health Care network meant that refugees affected by cuts in medical subsidies were still covered for their preventive health care (Amiri 1999).

### **Box 12 Health Care in Iran**

- ❖ “There were very good doctors and they would always give me free prescriptions.”
- ❖ “Our neighbours broke into my house and took me to the doctor once because I was very ill and my relatives didn't know where to take me.”
- ❖ “There were doctors and clinics available but I couldn't be bothered to try and come out of the house and learn my way around.”
- ❖ “My Iranian neighbours tried to encourage me to go to hospital but I didn't want to pay.”

Differential Treatment in Health Care (See Table 30)

3% of the sample interviewed complained of being verbally abused by Iranian health staff. All cases occurred when the women went to hospital to give birth. The hospital staff had made abrasive statements to the effect that Afghans had too many children and that they should stop having so many children when they are guests in someone else's country.

### **Box 13 Treatment by health staff in Iran**

- ❖ “The doctors treated us like sisters and mothers.”
- ❖ “There is no differentiation when you are paying!”

- ❖ “I pretended I was Iranian when I went to give birth at the hospital. I pretended to have fewer children too. They would swear at us for having so many kids.”
- ❖ “They were nicer to Iranians in the hospital ward.”
- ❖ “Some staff were nice and some weren’t so nice to us.”

#### Births in Iran (See Table 28)

75% of the sample were of childbearing age and were married or had been married. Of this group:

- 22% gave birth at home with Afghan dayehs<sup>11</sup>
- 28% had no births in Iran
- 20% gave birth at home with the help of female relatives, usually the mother-in-law
- 16% gave birth in hospital
- 7% gave birth at home with the help of Iranian neighbours or dayehs, and
- 7% gave birth in hospital when there were complications and at home at other times.

The choice for home births was related to conservative attitudes which restricted women’s mobility and contact with those outside the extended family as well as lack of funds. Some women seemed remarkably suspicious about the benefits of modern health care, relating childish horror stories, which may have been told to them by male relatives trying to deter them from visiting doctors and incurring medical bills.

#### Box 14 Births in Iran

- ❖ “My mother-in-law said that the births should be at home.”
- ❖ “I was frightened that if I went to give birth in the hospital they would tear my stomach open. I had never been to a hospital. “
- ❖ “I wanted to go to hospital to give birth but my husband wouldn’t let me.”
- ❖ “My husband tried to take me to hospital to give birth but I was afraid of what they might do to me there.”
- ❖ “One of my children was born in Iran and I used the dayeh we brought from our village in Afghanistan because my husband’s nephew didn’t want me to go to Iranians.”
- ❖ “I didn’t have enough money to go to hospital to give birth.”

#### Contraception (See Table 29)

“In July 1989, the Ministry of Health announced plans for government policy on population control...The media...encouraged the use of

<sup>11</sup> Dayeh – traditional Afghan birth attendant

contraceptives. Different forms of contraception (the pill, condom, coil and sterilisation) were free of charge and available on demand.” (Poya, 1999: p.99-100)

Of the sample, 65% did not use any form of contraception. This is misleading, however, because 25% were unmarried girls aged 16 and below. The actual number of women who would be using contraception was 45 out of 60. Of these 53% did not use any form of contraception. Those women who opted for a permanent solution had been in Iran between eight and ten years, had up to seven children, were aged between thirty and forty and tended to give birth in hospital. They were not nervous about hospitals and operations. Table 6 shows the method of contraception used by the remaining 47% while in Iran.

**Table 6 Women using contraception**

Method of Contraception	% of females (married + child bearing age)
Injection	11%
Oral contraception - pill	11%
Tubes tied	7%
Unspecified form of contraception	18%
Total	47%

Most women who opted for contraception reasoned that large numbers of children lower the quality of life. Women made a connection between more children and financial difficulties. This is interesting because it is not a connection generally made by women in most rural areas of Afghanistan. This is not only due to lack of access to contraceptives but also because communities have not been exposed to family planning campaigns.

Table 7 shows some interesting differences between those who used contraceptives and those who did not. More women using contraceptives are literate, had greater mobility and visited doctors in Iran.

**Table 7 Contraception, literacy and mobility**

	Used contraception		Did not use contraception	
	No.	% (of 21 women)	No.	% (of 24 women)
Literate	5	24%	3	8%
Prefer to wear the burqa	10	48%	18	75%
Were mobile in Iran	15	71%	12	50%
Visited a doctor while in Iran	19	90%	18	75%

**Box 15 Contraception Use**

❖ “I decided to go for family planning because my husband was disabled and we had so many children already - I couldn’t cope.”

- ❖ “We’re in a foreign country, if you have a lot of kids, it’s a headache, it’s noisy and you have to feed them.”
- ❖ “I had side effects from the injections. I didn’t want children because we couldn’t afford them and they drive me crazy.”
- ❖ “I would have started using contraception if we had stayed in Iran.”
- ❖ “Too many children make life horrible.”
- ❖ “We couldn’t afford kids so I went on the pill.”
- ❖ “I got my tubes tied because of economic pressure and the caesarean births.”

### Health Care in Afghanistan<sup>12</sup> (See Table 31)

28% of the sample were not aware of any medical personnel or facilities near their place of residence. 22% said with certainty that there were no medical facilities in their vicinity and 50% said that they had access to medical facilities or personnel within or near to their village. Access to health care in Afghanistan is determined by availability and proximity of facilities, as well as affordability of medical services, medicine and transportation. For those women who had enjoyed free medical services in Iran the comparative cost of medicine in Afghanistan was a cause for concern.

### Box 16 Health care in Afghanistan

- ❖ “I went to the doctor here in Afghanistan but I don’t trust them they are very dirty.”
- ❖ “We are sick every day because of the unhygienic conditions but medicine is expensive.”
- ❖ “There is a male doctor here for the children and for women’s problems we go to the male gynaecologist in town.”
- ❖ “To see a doctor I have to go to Herat and it’s one hour by road.”
- ❖ “Twenty minutes from the village by car there is a clinic for men and women.”
- ❖ “There is a male doctor and a female *dayeh* in the village.”

### Hygiene

With drought conditions and dry wells, potable water is a serious problem for most communities in Afghanistan this year. Many women complained that the money paid as part of the repatriation package was mostly used up by medical costs because most of

<sup>12</sup> Mine awareness is given to returnee refugees before their return to their villages. The following would indicate that some are ‘slipping through the net’. While discussing with one girl the advisor asked whether she had been taught to read the landscape to determine whether the area was mined, unmined or cleared. This is usually indicated by the presence of red rocks indicating the presence of mines or white rocks indicating that demining teams have cleared the area. To the dismay of the advisor, the girl, a very bright ten-year-old, replied: “I don’t know how you are supposed to know. I don’t know the difference between the red rocks and the white rocks.”

the children got sick upon return to Afghanistan. Most of the complaints were related to diarrhoeal diseases.

15% of the sample indicated that the water and sanitation facilities in Iran were similar to what they had in Afghanistan. In rural areas of Afghanistan, families may have access to some form of pit latrine or resort to open defaecation inside and/or outside their compound. Bathing facilities, if they exist, may consist of a small room with a drain or may mean having a bucket wash in a store room or stable. For those who have no bathing facilities, ablution will involve a rapid bucket wash at night outside the compound. The sample studied for this report had access to facilities at the upper end of the scale although primitive by modern standards.

85% of the sample had access to running water, flush toilets and bathroom facilities in every case in Iran. Some had access to water heaters. For these women and girls, facilities in Afghanistan are primitive and they are suffering from a great deal of discomfort because they are reluctant to use available facilities. They complained of feeling unclean most of the time.

Although it is unfortunate that families have to face such a drop in standards upon returning to their villages, there is a positive outcome. Having been exposed to the benefits of modern sanitation and resulting improved hygiene standards, returnee families will show much greater interest in bath and latrine projects and health education campaigns.

It was interesting that unlike some other parts of Afghanistan the task of water collection falls to men and boys. This could have implications since the amount of water available for use at any time relies on availability and willingness of family males to collect water.

### **Box 17 Water and Sanitation**

- ❖ “We can’t do anything about the sanitation here, we’ll just have to live with it.”
- ❖ “We had running water in Iran and it was good and now look at me I’m black.”
- ❖ “The children cry because they can’t wash themselves properly and they don’t like going to the toilet here.”
- ❖ “All the children are vomiting and they have diarrhoea. The kids will not drink the water, they say it’s dirty and they find the wind and dust difficult.”
- ❖ “We never put our hands in cold water in Iran. Is there a comparison?”
- ❖ “Children are frightened of falling down the toilet hole.”
- ❖ “Here the sanitation is very bad and the girls get upset about going to wash.”
- ❖ “My daughter has become very difficult. She says the water from the wells here is no good. She says we have something like a bathroom and when she meets people she says things like <<This woman smells!>>. I don’t know what to do with her.”

- ❖ “In Iran we got water from taps and here the men bring water from the canal or from the well which has a hand pump. We get water from any place where we are told it’s clean.”
- ❖ “The wells and the hand pumps don’t work so we will get water from canals.”

**Education**

Literacy (See Table 24)

30% of the entire sample were literate (10% married, 2% FHH, 18% child). 83% of the married group, 91% of the FHH group and 27% of the child group were illiterate. The break down by ‘year’ group tends to indicate that in this sample children mostly found access to some form of education in Iran. For all the groups the number of literate females increased the longer they were in Iran. There can be two reasons for this. Firstly, access to adult literacy and education could have been better for families who arrived in Iran before ‘refugee fatigue’ set in. Secondly, some individuals may have had access to education in Afghanistan prior to leaving since they would have left before the arrival of more conservative Mujahideen groups and the Taliban.

**Table 8 Literacy and ages of sample**

Age in years	9-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	Total
Illiterate	0%	5%	11%	5%	17%	11%	11%	2%	5%	2%	69%
Literate	10%	8%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	31%

**Breakdown by ‘year’ group:**

Percentage of year group as opposed to whole sample

- Less than four years 96% of married group, 100% of FHH group and 37% of child group were illiterate.
- Four to eight years 57% of married group, 100% of FHH group and 33% of child group were illiterate
- Eight years or more 50% of married group, 75% of the FHH group and 0% of the child group were illiterate.

School in Iran (See Table 25 and Table 26)

According to Amiri (1999) the majority of school age children of documented refugees attend regular Iranian schools financed by the Ministry of Education and Training with some support from UNHCR. Problems include shortage of trained teachers, cultural incompatibility, financial problems and inaccessibility of people in underdeveloped areas. In addition, there are informal schools set up by Afghans to cater for those who cannot attend formal schools due to their legal status, economic or other reasons. The same report states that in 1998, 61,277 girls and 51,918 boys were studying in Iranian schools. Economic considerations prevent most refugees from attending university. Furthermore Amiri states that women held education, literacy and skills training as top priorities to improve their own lives. The responses of this sample did not entirely match these findings.

Of the sample, 25% were children and did not have responsibility for their own schooling. Of the 45 women, 27% sent their children to school in Iran. 18% were newly weds or had children below school age, and 55% did not send their children to school. Reasons for not sending children to school included waiting for the fathers to take responsibility, distance to the school, fear of racism against children and children's difficulties understanding the dialect spoken in Iran. Lack of residence cards and money also reduced access. None of the widows sent their children to school because they felt that without a male family head it was impossible to send children to school. Lack of funds and problems with mobility also deterred this group from sending children to school.

75% of those who had lived in Iran for more than 8 years sent their children to school whereas the percentage for those in other year groups was considerable less. This correlates closely with the mobility of these groups. Of the whole sample, 24% attended formal school or literacy classes in Iran (8% married, 3% FHH, 13% child). Of the girls in the sample, just over half studied while they were in Iran.

**Table 9 Literacy and attendance at an educational facility**

	Attended school or literacy class in Iran	Did not attend school or literacy class in Iran	
Illiterate	2%	68%	70%
Literate	22%	8%	30%
	24%	76%	100%

Table 10 shows that the women who did not send their children to school were mostly illiterate and did not attend adult literacy classes. More women who did not send their children to school were engaged in some sort of occupation, usually food-processing activities, which probably took up their time. Whereas all the women who sent children to school had good mobility in Iran and could therefore take their children to school, less than half of the other group were similarly mobile.

**Table 10 Details of women sending children to school**

	% <sup>13</sup> of women who sent children to school	% of women who did not send children to school
Literate	11%	2%
Working Woman	9%	31%
Prefers burqa	9%	42%
Good mobility in Iran	27%	24%
Attended adult literacy	11%	0%

Some girls had received small amounts of formal education and continued by teaching themselves and siblings using text books at home. 20% of the girls interviewed had attended mosque schools in Iran. These schools were run by Iranians or Afghans and generally charged a modest fee. 5% of the women sent their daughters to mosque school and formal school, while 4% sent their daughters to mosque school only.

<sup>13</sup> This is percentage of 75% of the whole sample i.e. the whole sample minus 25% children.



Surprisingly, in deciding which family members should receive schooling, from the interviews there appeared to be very little discrimination against girls. Where it did occur, the family could be conservative<sup>14</sup> and opted for mosque education for boys.

It is alarming that such a small percentage of the sample attended educational facilities or adult literacy classes. Further study would be needed to determine extent of literacy and attitudes towards education among refugee communities in Iran before recommendations for action can be formulated.

### **Breakdown by 'year' group:**

Percentage of year group as opposed to whole sample

- Less than four years: 25% of child group attended school in Iran.
- Four to eight years: 67% of child group attended school in Iran.
- Eight years or more: 100% of the child group attended school in Iran.

### **Box 18 Returnee women and girls, on school and education**

- ❖ "None of the children went to school because it's up to the father. I don't know anything about it."
- ❖ "My son didn't understand the language so we didn't send him to school."
- ❖ "I studied at home up to Class 5, by myself using books. My sister studied three classes at home too."
- ❖ "The situation seemed uncertain so I didn't send my kids to school."
- ❖ "The teachers don't let on that kids are Afghan and give them charity and special help quietly, without other students finding out."
- ❖ "My sons didn't go to school and played truant."
- ❖ "My husband said we'd be going back soon so I didn't try to send my daughter to school."
- ❖ "It was too far to send the boys to school."
- ❖ "I loved school but after a while I couldn't afford to go. I would like to study."
- ❖ "We were studying the Quran and no one would take us to school."
- ❖ Mother: "I paid for my son to go to school but not for my daughters."
- ❖ "We managed to get a card somehow but the girls were too small to go to school."
- ❖ "I went to a private school because I didn't have a card."
- ❖ "My eldest son used to study the Quran with an Afghan mullah and go to state school from time to time."

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<sup>14</sup> Insisted on little or no mobility for women and girls.

- ❖ “I had no husband so I didn’t send my children to school. I have no one to run my life and tell me what to do, no one to take care of me and the children.”
- ❖ “My sons went to Afghan school and we paid for their education.”
- ❖ “I studied until grade 5 or 6 but the school was too far and there was no one to travel with me so I gave up. I had to buy my own books.”

### School in Afghanistan

The families in the sample are mostly sending boys to school unless economic problems mean that they have to work. Girls are not being sent to school because of lack of formal educational facilities. Most families seemed to think that there were no home schools in their vicinity. There seemed to be a very laissez faire attitude to girls’ education – if something was available it would be used otherwise no one was going to go out of their way or make an effort to educate their girls. It is vital that male and female heads of those families who would take advantage of educational facilities for girls be alerted to the existence of such facilities in their vicinity.

### Box 19 Returnee women and girls, on female education in Afghanistan

- ❖ “What can I do if they won’t let anyone set up schools here!”
- ❖ “One of my sons goes to school on and off here. I would send girls to school here if there was a school for them.”
- ❖ “There is a class available in the mosque. My elder daughter teaches my younger daughter. We’ve got the school books from Iran.”
- ❖ “If we had school in our own country we could go.”
- ❖ “One of my small girls keeps saying <<It’s time to go to school! >>.”

### Adult Literacy

“...more than 300,000 Afghan adults (58% women) have completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade equivalent gaining literacy and numeracy skills. The LMO (Literacy Movement Organisation) programme includes children from the age of 9 and above to cater for the needs of those who have dropped out of the formal school system.” (Amiri 1999, p.11)

Women had a number of reasons for not attending adult literacy classes. Time and distance seemed to be the largest factor. Mobility and conservatism were also important factors for many women. It would seem that most of the adults in this sample did not benefit from any outreach services and had little interest in becoming literate.

It is evident that literacy, skills training and education projects in Iran are bypassing certain groups of women and girls. Reasons for this are beyond the scope of this study but one factor could be that many of latest refugees in Iran are illegal immigrants and have to avoid contact with any formal institutions in order to escape detection.

## Box 20 Women's reasons for not attending adult literacy classes

- ❖ "We were ashamed to go to adult literacy."
- ❖ "I didn't go to literacy classes because my husband was disabled."
- ❖ "I have nerve problems so I didn't go to adult literacy classes."
- ❖ "I had no time to go to literacy classes. I had to look after my children when my eldest daughter got married."
- ❖ "I didn't have enough time to study."

## Shelter

Currently many returnees are staying with relatives ranging from siblings to parents to in-laws to children and uncles. Only 8% of the sample are currently living in their own house (See Table 11). A number of women said that their husbands and sons were rebuilding houses which had been completely destroyed. Some women mentioned having to buy land or already having bought land to build houses. This indicates that some families were able to save money during their time in Iran. One woman mentioned that her family had bought land by paying for it in instalments while they were in Iran.

**Table 11 Where returnees are staying**

Living with	No. of Married women	%	No. of women from FHH	%	No. of children	%	Total %
Relatives	28	47%	8	13%	15	25%	85%
Neighbours	3	5%	-	-	-	-	5%
Own	3	5%	2	3%	-	-	8%
Charity	-	-	1	2%	-	-	2%

Widows who did not have their own house were living off charity. It was difficult to assess the shelter situation in great detail as the advisor was sometimes arriving in the wake of UNHCR teams offering assistance in relation to shelter and women were reluctant to miss a possible opportunity for receiving more help. There were some families who had no house to rebuild, no land on which to build a house and were staying with family members until they could think of a solution.

## Box 21 Shelter for Widows

- ❖ "My mother and I move from one sister's house to another sister's house."
- ❖ "The situation for housing is not so good for me. I have a room for one year and then I don't know what will happen. I managed to get the room for free from my distant relatives because I cried a lot."

## ***Mobility and Dress***

Mobility in Iran (See Table 21)

Amiri (1999) states that "...reviewing the effects of Iranian women on Afghan women Refugees, many of those interviewed indicated that their men were less restrictive with them since they have come to Iran" (p.10). It would be interesting to conduct further studies on such issues. The sample of interviewees presented an interesting picture which was at times very depressing. Many women were obviously in self-imposed purdah<sup>15</sup> whereas in other cases male relatives actively discouraged mobility and freedom of any kind. What seems evident for this sample is that they had little access to any programmes or organisations in Iran, which were trying to bring about any attitudinal changes within their communities.

35% of the sample explained that they did not have much mobility in Iran. 38% of the married group, 20% of the child group and 45% of the FHH group had little or no mobility in Iran. In every one of these three groups the largest number lacking mobility had been in Iran 4 years or less. Most of these women lived in the marginal districts of Tehran. None of this group had ever received schooling of any form. Half of this group gave birth at home accompanied by an Afghan dayeh or traditional birth attendant.

Of the 65% of the sample who enjoyed fair to good mobility, one third were girls below the age of sixteen and one third lived in the marginal districts of Tehran. One third of this group had been to school or adult literacy classes. Almost the entire group could visit an Iranian doctor whenever they needed to.

### **Box 22 Women's Mobility in Iran**

- ❖ "I couldn't understand the dialect so I didn't leave the house much. I didn't switch on the TV unless my sons came in and switched it on to watch."
- ❖ "My brother-in-law didn't let any of us women out of the house because he was a mullah. My husband, God rest his soul, didn't like me going out or talking out loud in the house."
- ❖ "In Iran I didn't go out. I didn't know anyone and I didn't feel like going out."
- ❖ "I was poor so why should I go out of the house?"
- ❖ "I stayed at home because men don't like their women to go out, to hospital and stuff."
- ❖ "It's not our custom to leave the house. I always went out with my husband, never alone."
- ❖ "My husband let me out but he didn't want me to be too 'free'."
- ❖ "I didn't know how to get around. My daughter wouldn't leave the house because she didn't understand the language and it was very busy outside. I didn't go out much because I couldn't understand the accent."
- ❖ "I wouldn't go out alone."
- ❖ "Mobility was good except when there was a clamp down and men were being arrested."

<sup>15</sup> Purdah – segregation of women from men in Islam, through the veil and physical separation in separate quarters

- ❖ “My sisters’ husbands didn’t let us go out of the house much.”
- ❖ “Our men didn’t want us to go out of the house.”
- ❖ “My father didn’t let me go out much in Iran.”
- ❖ “Our husbands didn’t like us to go out too much. There were too many Afghans in Varamin and our husbands worried about those Afghans. We sometimes went out with our husbands.”
- ❖ “I didn’t let the kids out of the house in Iran because I felt it was unsafe and here at least I can let them leave the house.”

### Mobility in Afghanistan (See Table 22)

15% of the sample said that they did not know how much mobility they had in Afghanistan. All of these women expressed problems with wearing the burqa<sup>16</sup> and all had enjoyed good mobility in Iran. 33% of the women stated flatly that they had little or no mobility in Afghanistan. This group were split down the middle in their attitude towards wearing the burqa, with some feeling more secure under cover and others finding this kind of hejab intolerable. They were also split roughly half-and-half in terms of their mobility in Iran. It would appear that lack of mobility comes from two ‘extremes’. Women with conservative families will have little or no mobility regardless of where they are or what the ruling regime decrees. In the areas where the interviewees live, even fetching water, traditionally a woman’s task in other areas, is only carried out by men and boys. Women who have been away from Afghanistan for a decade or more are terrified of the Taliban, who are an ‘unknown quantity’ to them. They have no wish to come into any form of contact with them and find the burqa unbearable. They left the Afghanistan of the Communists or of the Mujahideen and they have no idea what is or is not possible in terms of dress code and mobility under the Taliban.

52% of the women felt that they had good mobility in Afghanistan. Around one third of these women dislike wearing the burqa but will wear it if they have to. One third did not have good mobility in Iran. Most had been in Iran for four years or less and left the Taliban’s Afghanistan. They know the limits and possibilities of mobility and dress code under Taliban rule. Comments about wearing the burqa, listed in Box 24, reveal much about the perspective of this group.

### Box 23 Mobility in Afghanistan

- ❖ “Here sometimes I can go out, when I have to go out and get water myself.”
- ❖ Husband: “There shouldn’t be mobility for women. If everyone lets their wives run around then I’ll let mine out too.”

<sup>16</sup> All enveloping cloth covering the wearer from head to toe, with a grille allowing the wearer to see immediately in front of them.

- ❖ Husband: “If the Taliban see the women out they will kill<sup>17</sup> me so I get the water. The madrasah is close and Taliban cars come and go all the time.”
- ❖ “We don’t like to go out much here because Iran is free and Afghanistan is not free.”
- ❖ “In Iran you could go out until late, I don’t go out much here.”
- ❖ “When we get fed up here we go to town.”

### The burqa (See Table 23)

The burqa is an all-enveloping piece of cloth which covers a woman from head to toe and has a small grille so that a woman can see where she is going. It has a tight fitting cap which holds it in place and ensures that it does not slip off. The burqa is the form of hejab<sup>18</sup> favoured by the Taliban at present. The chador siyah is a large black piece of cloth which covers the woman but the face is left uncovered. Women hold it shut with one hand or using their mouth. This is a common form of hejab in Iran.

Of the married group 42% did not like the idea of wearing the burqa. 27% of the FHH disliked the burqa. 87% of the children did not like the burqa. The longer the time spent away from Afghanistan the greater the reluctance women and girls felt to wear the burqa.

Half of the sample did not like wearing the burqa and the other half felt more comfortable *with* the burqa. Of those who dislike the burqa only 3% were not very mobile in Iran and 43% had received some form of education. Of those who like the burqa 66% did not enjoy great freedom or mobility in Iran and only 3% studied.

What is of concern are comments indicating that young boys are joining in the harassment of women and girls not wearing the burqa through acts such as throwing stones or verbally insulting them. Young boys can only be taking their cues from elders which would indicate community complicity in forcing women to wear the burqa. This sort of behaviour could also indicate a reaction against outsiders, signified by their chador siyah. This sort of discriminatory behaviour should be taken up with community leaders.

### Box 24 Burqa or chador siyah?

- ❖ “I prefer the chador siyah but here it is too shameful to wear it. It’s too ‘open’.”
- ❖ “The chador siyah is lighter but with a burqa you’re a better Muslim.”
- ❖ “The chador siyah is better because with the burqa we cannot see and we choke.”
- ❖ “The burqa is better because it is our custom but the chador siyah is more comfortable.”
- ❖ “The burqa and the chador siyah are the same although I get a headache and feel strangulated by the burqa.”

<sup>17</sup> It must be made clear that this was a figure of speech rather than a known fact.

<sup>18</sup> Hejab – Islamic veil

- ❖ “I prefer the burqa because both my hands are free.”
- ❖ “It’ll be a bit difficult to get used to the burqa but it’s our custom.”
- ❖ “I haven’t put the burqa on because it suffocates me. Why don’t you wear one? I’ll do like you and pretend I’m foreign. I’ve got a chador siyah with my ruy band<sup>19</sup>.”
- ❖ “Even if the Taliban execute me I won’t wear the burqa.”
- ❖ “We prefer the burqa but we had to wear the chador siyah because people used to laugh at us.”
- ❖ “When I wear my burqa I have the urge to throw it back over my head...I want to wear the chador siyah and go out, either the Taliban will kill me or it’ll be OK!”
- ❖ “All the ladies have the same colour burqas and I lose myself.”
- ❖ “The chador siyah doesn’t cover me properly. We are country people and we’re used to being covered up.”
- ❖ “We don’t wear the chador siyah because it’s not the custom here.”
- ❖ “I will wear whatever it’s the custom for me to wear.”
- ❖ “The burqa is suffocating and we can’t see.”
- ❖ “The burqa makes me out of breath and I can’t see. I want to die.”
- ❖ “We are afraid so we wear the burqa.”
- ❖ “Small boys in the village stone us if we wear the chador siyah. They tell us that it’s chador siyah in Iran, burqa here. My girls wear chador siyah here. The Talibs don’t let us go out with bare faces. When family and neighbours ask my girls why they go out with chador siyah and insist that they wear the burqa, they say they’re not used to the burqa like other 12 year old girls.”

### ***Assistance from Organisations***

#### **International and Afghan Agencies**

A number of organisations are directly or indirectly involved in the repatriation process<sup>20</sup>. These meet on a regular basis and information sharing between those involved as well as with those not involved in the process has been good. UNHCR have compiled a village-wise database for voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran for Herat province, covering the period for the Joint Programme. This is available for all provinces/districts. It is distributed to all agencies in Herat on a regular basis and can be accessed on request by interested agencies.

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<sup>19</sup> This literally means ‘face cover’ and is a flap of cloth attached to a chador siyah which can be lowered to conceal a person’s face.

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR, IOM, MDM, IRC, WHO and UNICEF.

Overall, apart from organisations closely involved in the repatriation process (See Repatriation from Iran to Afghanistan) most organisations expect to come into contact with returnee families during their routine work with communities but no organisation seemed to be considering designing programmes that target returnee groups per se.

At the time of the survey, most organisations seemed to be concerned with the growing trickle of internally displaced families fleeing the impact of the drought in Ghor province. The drought was creating serious problems for families in districts of Herat, Farah and Badghis provinces and the priority for UN agencies, NGOs, the ICRC and IFRCs was to ensure that communities were assisted rapidly in order to avoid mass movements of displaced families looking for food. Compared to these families, the returnee families from Iran appeared to be considerably better off, with in most cases, some assets and/or savings.

Of the NGOs dealing with returnee families to some extent:

- IRC had built a clinic at Islam Qala, which was being used to provide health care during the repatriation process. Other than that, at the time of the interviews they had not yet initiated programmes specifically targeting returnee families.
- MDM work with returnee families in the clinic at the transit camp.
- IAM do a rapid survey of the psychosocial status of families at the transit camp but must use their results carefully because of the sensitive nature of the information and issues involved.

IRC and Christianaid operate an umbrella grant programme, donating funds to local partner NGOs. The advisor also decided to interview those organisations with longer term developmental programmes. As a result some local NGOs such as OI, SIEAL, AREA, NPO/RRAA and CHA were interviewed. DACAAR also engages in community development programmes in rural areas but had not as yet come across significant numbers of returnee families.

A number of staff from most organisations have had gender awareness training. Most ensure that they elicit information from women as well as men when they conduct needs assessments and surveys with communities. There is as yet little awareness of the skills and talents available among women and girls from returnee families. This should be remedied.

### Local Authorities

Apart from cooperating with United Nations agencies and international and national NGOs, in terms of 'monitoring' activities and ensuring that Islamic rules were adhered to, the authorities play a limited role in providing actual assistance. Their involvement with the repatriation process starts from Zero Point once refugees cross into Afghanistan and ends once they leave the transit camp bound for their final destinations. The authorities were more concerned with the internally displaced arriving from Ghor and appeared perturbed at the amount of interest that the returnee families were generating. Authorities were mostly concerned that the aid community should provide assistance for families displaced because of the drought, and to communities facing difficulties with potable water and irrigation water.



### **Seed Communities**

There was little opportunity to discuss with members of seed communities. This was due to the fact that in many cases families were acting as host to new arrivals and wanted to demonstrate their hospitality towards the newcomers. They only spoke of their joy at being reunited with relatives and neighbours.

There were some indications, however, that there was room for resentment when resident families saw returnee families receiving WFP wheat and assistance to rebuild their homes. Under the current circumstances, in every village and town in Afghanistan, there are a myriad needs and limited assistance. In one village, the headman wanted to know if the assistance would only be for returnees or whether the village's other problems, namely shortage of irrigation and potable water, would also be dealt with.

While the advisor was inspecting the rocketed home of one returnee family, a lady asked shyly if the agency could help her reconstruct her destroyed house, as it is adjacent and was destroyed by the same rocket. While interviewing one returnee, a woman brought her badly retarded son and asked if the advisor could give him some medicine to cure him. Although one cannot generalise from one interview, below is an account, given by one ten-year-old girl, of her experience after being back for a few weeks. She followed the advisor from the house where she was staying in order to explain what it was like for her to be back:

#### **Box 25 One girl's experience of returning to her village**

❖ "Children don't play with me and they're horrible to me. Children here are so rude and so stupid. They've never been to school. Mothers don't like them playing with us. They say we're different and their children shouldn't play with us. People are jealous and envious of the things we have brought back from Iran. The other children have broken my toys. They broke my gas cooker and my fridge. You won't believe what it was like the day we came back. Everyone in the village came out and they were staring into our car to see what we had brought back from Iran. I couldn't believe the number of people and they weren't embarrassed, they just kept staring. I broke into tears."

The advisor also witnessed a 'welcoming' party when village women came to visit women who had recently arrived. The exchanges were very formal and the occasion seemed to provide a chance for tea and biscuits and opportunity for women and children to put on their best clothes, a welcome change from the drudgery of day to day life. Close family members were genuinely overjoyed to see their relatives again and evidently wanted to share their happiness with friends and neighbours. This 'guest period' does come to an end, depending on the financial means of the family and then returnee families have to start conducting normal lives as community members.

Fortunately, most agencies have had enough foresight to ensure that assistance to returnee groups also benefits the seed community. The continuation of such measures should ensure that the chances for conflict between new arrivals and residents are eliminated or reduced.

## **Appendix A Checklists**

### Interviews with Returnee Females

- Age
- Number of children
- Marital status
- Level of education
- Where from (Village, District)
- Work in Afghanistan before migration
- When and why migrated to Iran
- Where lived in Iran
- How informed of repatriation process
- Treatment during repatriation process (information provided, understanding of conditions in Afghanistan, good/bad/missing service, centre in Iran, registration, transport, transit camp facilities)
- Family members in Iran
- Opportunities and desire to return to Iran
- Husband's job before migration, in Iran and after repatriation
- Health care in Iran
- Health care in Afghanistan
- In Iran access to female doctors, family planning etc.
- Differentiation in provision of health care
- Where births occurred
- Availability and use of midwives
- School in Iran (did girls have equal access/adult literacy/educational facilities)
- School in Afghanistan
- Mobility in Iran
- Mobility in Afghanistan
- Dress
- Work possibilities Afghanistan
- Work in Iran
- Work in Afghanistan now
- Shelter
- Sanitation
- WFP wheat

### Interviews with Organisations

- Information on projects and programmes
- Contact with returnees
- Future plans for assistance
- Gender awareness
- Community participation training
- Co-ordination and information sharing
- Gender focal persons
- Assistance to women

## ***Appendix B Terms of Reference***

### Objectives:

- To appraise the overall situation of returnees with a particular focus on women
- To assess as far as possible in the time available the capability of NGOs, in particular local NGOs, of dealing with returnee needs
- To raise awareness on any particular needs, as voiced by returnee women, which were unmet during the repatriation process
- To raise awareness on any particular needs or concerns, as voiced by returnee women, which may remain unmet due to difficulties for NGOs in accessing women
- To assess areas for capacity building among Afghan NGOs in order to improve programming with returnees, in particular women
- To investigate and raise awareness on other vital issues or concerns as they arise during the field trip

### Particular groups to be contacted and issues to be addressed:

#### Returnees:

- Initiation of the repatriation

How were men/women informed? How were people treated? What information was provided? Was information adequate and accurate? What did women understand about conditions in Afghanistan? Which of the services provided were good? What services were missing?

- General status

When did they go to Iran? Where did they live? How long were they there? Can they return to Iran? Under what circumstances would the returnees go back to Iran? Have families been separated? Do they plan to move to other areas in Afghanistan? Where? At what point and why?

- Livelihood issues

Who was earning previously? Can they earn now? How is their livelihood/income going to be affected? What indicators will you use to measure livelihood? What are the most common skills, training, or professions of the returnees?

- Health services

In Iran: How accessible was health care in Iran for Afghans? For women in particular, what access was there to reproductive health? Mother and child health? Perinatal health care? Did health service providers give the same service to Afghan women as they did to Iranian women? Did Afghan women have access to the same clinics? Did they give birth in hospital or at home? Did they have midwives? Contraceptives?

In Afghanistan: Have they located health care services in their vicinity? Differences between Afghanistan and Iran in this respect?

- Education

In Iran: What level of education was available to their children? Did girls have equal access to education facilities? What about adult literacy for women? Preferences for educating girls and boys?

In Afghanistan: What educational facilities are there in the area? What will they do in order to educate girls? What did women understand about the availability of education to girls in Afghanistan before they arrived? Is it what they imagined?

- Mobility issues for women

Level of mobility in Iran? Level of mobility in Afghanistan? Did they travel on buses? Go to the market alone? Shop with other women? Travel to visit sick relatives or attend family events? Did they visit health clinics without a male escort? What about dress codes? Did they expect to wear the burqa in Afghanistan? Did they have burqas?

### Local Population

How do local people see the influx of returnees affecting:

- Livelihood
- Food Security
- Education services
- Health services
- Mobility of women

### Local Authorities

What has been their role so far? How have they co-ordinated with INGOs and the UN? What problems have arisen in general? What particular problems have arisen with unaccompanied women/children? What plans do they have to further assist returnees?

### UN, International and Afghan NGOs

Activities/contact with returnees so far? Future plans for assistance to returnees, especially women and children. Areas where they feel they may need capacity building/support from other bodies? How do Afghan NGOs decide what programs to implement? Do they perform needs assessments? Confer with the INGOs or the UN agencies? Who is funding the local NGOs? How does IRC select/identify the local NGOs they fund through the umbrella grant?

- Co-ordination

Frequency and content of co-ordination meetings between NGOs, UNHCR/WFP, IOM and local officials? How is information shared or exchanged? How are women consulted or involved? Does WFP have a presence? Do UNHCR have regular staff based in Herat? Are they decision-makers? Have they issued any reports on the situation? Are returnees consuming the wheat which they are given at the border or using it for other purposes? What other purposes is wheat being used for and why.

- Other

Approximately how many unaccompanied women/children repatriate?  
How is the drought situation affecting the situation?

### ***Appendix C Internally Displaced People from Ghor Province***

At the insistence of the Taliban authorities and because of a genuine interest in the situation, the advisor visited Minaret camp for IDPs. Temperatures were high and people were sitting in any shade that they could find, near walls or by constructing makeshift shades using scarves or blankets. It was evident that many IDPs were spending most of their days and nights in the open. The IDPs generally travelled from Ghor with some form of vehicular transport and generally claimed that the drivers had transported them as a charitable act, a wealthier person had paid for their transport or they had sold assets in order to pay for transport.

Many people mentioned that women, children and the elderly were becoming sick from eating plants, with some families claiming that infants and children had perished on the way. Families talked of being forced to sell assets since the land did not produce anything. When queried on rumours of selling children all respondents said that they had not heard of anyone being forced to sell children. The men explained that they would return to Ghor only if there was a guarantee of paid employment. Some had already found work as labourers and some women were spinning wool for local traders.

The advisor could see evidence of eye and skin infections and people mentioned diarrhoea and stomach aches as major problems. The children were filthy and some were malnourished. This situation is obviously exacerbated due to the shortage of sanitary latrines, problems with supply of water for drinking and washing as well as the heat and the dust. People spoken too seemed exhausted and confused which is not surprising since they were on the whole hungry, hot, thirsty and uncomfortable.

Since the numbers had not yet reached 'alarming' proportions agencies were giving some assistance and keeping an eye on the situation to see how it would develop. The Taliban Ministry of Martyrs and Returnees was taking an interest in the situation of the IDPs and haranguing agencies to provide assistance. Agencies seemed reluctant to provide a significant amount of assistance in order to prevent a mass exodus from Ghor. WFP was soliciting proposals for Ghor from NGOs in order to provide assistance in situ in order to deter people from leaving their villages in search of food.

***Appendix D Reference Material***

Amiri, Soudabeh *Afghan Gender Equity Programme (AGEP): A Concept Paper* Islamic Republic of Iran, Prepared for UNHCR (May 2000)

Herat Protection Section *Preliminary summary of findings of returnee monitoring of returnees under the 'Joint Programme for the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from Iran' in the Western region.* UNHCR SO (12 July 2000)

IRIN, *News Brief* (October 2000)

Lumpp, Katharina (UNHCR Protection Officer) *Medical Care for returnees during the voluntary repatriation in Afghanistan* UNHCR (July 2000)

Poya, Maryam *Women, Work and Islamism: Ideology and Resistance in Iran* Zed Books (1999)

*UNHCR Returnee Monitoring Form*

**Appendix E Tables**

**Table 12 Ages of Females (Above 17 years old) in Sample**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	17-20	5	22%	15%	8%	21-25	4	17%	12%	7%
>4<8 y	17-20	1	14%	3%	2%	21-25	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	17-20	1	25%	3%	2%	21-25	0	0%	0%	0%
		7		21%	12%		4		12%	7%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	26-30	4	17%	12%	7%	31-35	3	13%	9%	5%
>4<8 y	26-30	2	29%	6%	3%	31-35	2	29%	6%	3%
>8 years	26-30	2	50%	6%	3%	31-35	1	25%	3%	2%
		8		24%	13%		6		18%	10%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	36-40	5	22%	15%	8%	41-60	2	9%	6%	3%
>4<8 y	36-40	2	29%	6%	3%	41-60	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	36-40	0	0%	0%	0%	41-60	0	0%	0%	0%
		7		21%	12%		2		6%	3%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	26-30	1	20%	9%	2%	31-35	1	20%	9%	2%
>4<8 y	26-30	0	0%	0%	0%	31-35	1	50%	9%	2%
>8 years	26-30	2	50%	18%	3%	31-35	1	25%	9%	2%
		3		27%	5%		3		27%	5%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	36-40	1	20%	7%	2%	41-60	2	40%	18%	3%
>4<8 y	36-40	1	50%	7%	2%	41-60	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	36-40	0	0%	0%	0%	41-60	1	25%	9%	2%
		2		13%	3%		3		27%	5%

**Table 13 Number of Children per Woman**

Married	No. of children	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	0-3	10	43%	29%	17%	4-6	8	35%	24%	13%
>4<8 y	0-3	2	29%	6%	3%	4-6	3	43%	9%	5%
>8 years	0-3	2	50%	6%	3%	4-6	2	50%	6%	3%
		14		41%	23%		13		38%	22%

Married	No. of children	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	7-9	5	22%	15%	8%
>4<8 y	7-9	2	29%	6%	3%
>8 years	7-9	0	0%	0%	0%
		7		21%	12%

FHH	No. of children	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	0-3	2	40%	18%	3%	4-6	2	40%	18%	3%
>4<8 y	0-3	0	0%	0%	0%	4-6	2	100%	18%	3%
>8 years	0-3	0	0%	0%	0%	4-6	2	50%	18%	3%
		2		18%	3%		6		55%	10%

FHH	No. of children	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<4y	7-9	1	20%	9%	2%
>4<8 y	7-9	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	7-9	2	50%	18%	3%
		3		27%	5%

**Table 14 Female Headed and Vulnerable Households**

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Widow	3	60%	27%	5%	Disabled	1	20%	9%	2%
>4<8 y	Widow	2	100%	18%	3%	Disabled	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Widow	0	0%	0%	0%	Disabled	1	25%	9%	2%
		5		45%	8%		2		18%	3%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Old	1	20%	9%	2%	Political	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	Old	0	0%	0%	0%	Political	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Old	2	50%	18%	3%	Political	1	25%	9%	2%
		3		27%	5%		1		9%	2%

**Table 15 Number of Years in Iran**



In Iran for 4 years or less

Married	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=2	0	0%	0%	0%
<=3	11	48%	32%	18%
<=4	12	52%	35%	20%
	23	100%	67%	38%

FHH	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=2	1	20%	9%	2%
<=3	1	20%	9%	2%
<=4	3	60%	27%	5%
	5	100%	45%	9%

Child	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=2	2	25%	13%	3%
<=3	2	25%	13%	3%
<=4	4	50%	27%	7%
	8	100%	53%	13%

In Iran between 4 and 8 years

Married	>4<8 y	% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=5	3	43%	9%	5%
<=6	1	14%	3%	2%
<=7	1	14%	3%	2%
<=8	2	29%	6%	3%
	7			

FHH		% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=5	1	50%	9%	2%
<=6	0	0%	0%	0%
<=7	1	50%	9%	2%
<=8	0	0%	0%	0%
	2			

Child		% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=5	1	33%	7%	2%
<=6	0	0%	0%	0%
<=7	1	33%	7%	2%
<=8	1	33%	7%	2%
	3			

In Iran for 8 years or more

Married	>8 years	% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=10	2	50%	6%	3%
<=15	1	25%	3%	2%
<=20	1	25%	3%	2%

FHH		% of year and sub group	% of the subgroup	% of sample
<=10	1	25%	9%	2%



Married	None	20	33%	Food process	4	7%	Carpet and kilim	4	7%	Wash clothes	3	5%	Tailoring	3	5%
FHH	None	4	7%	Food process	6	10%	Carpet and kilim	0	0%	Wash clothes	0	0%	Tailoring	1	2%
Child	None	11	18%	Food process	3	5%	Carpet and kilim	1	2%	Wash clothes	0	0%	Tailoring	0	0%
			58%			22%			8%			5%			7%

As proportion of sub-group

		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Married	None	20	59%	Food process	4	12%	Carpet and kilim	4	12%	Wash clothes	3	9%	Tailoring	3	9%
FHH	None	4	36%	Food process	6	55%	Carpet and kilim	0	0%	Wash clothes	0	0%	Tailoring	1	9%
Child	None	11	73%	Food process	3	20%	Carpet and kilim	1	7%	Wash clothes	0	0%	Tailoring	0	0%

As proportion of '4 years or less in Iran' group

	Married	FHH	Children	Total	Total %
None	15	1	5	21	58%
Food processing	2	3	2	7	19%
Carpet and kilim	2	0	1	3	8%
Wash clothes	3	0	0	3	8%
Tailoring/knitting	1	1	0	2	6%
	23	5	8	36	100%

As proportion of 'between 4 and 8 years in Iran' group

	Married	FHH	Children	Total	Total %
None	4	0	2	6	50%
Food processing	2	2	1	5	42%
Carpet and kilim	0	0	0	0	0%
Wash clothes	0	0	0	0	0%
Tailoring/knitting	1	0	0	1	8%
	7	2	3	12	100%

As proportion of '8 years or more in Iran'

	Married	FHH	Children	Total	Total %
None	1	3	4	8	67%
Food processing	0	1	0	1	8%
Carpet and kilim	2	0	0	2	17%
Wash clothes	0	0	0	0	0%
Tailoring/knitting	1	0	0	1	8%
	4	4	4	12	100%

**Table 19 Women who are Interested to Work in Afghanistan**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
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<4y	Yes	8	35%	24%	13%	No	15	65%	44%	25%
<4y	Of the yes 50% worked in Iran								0%	0%
>4<8 y	Yes	2	29%	6%	3%	No	5	71%	15%	8%
>4<8 y	Of the yes 100% worked in Iran									
>8 years	Yes	2	50%	6%	3%	No	2	50%	6%	3%
>8 years	Of the yes 100% worked in Iran									

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	2	40%	18%	3%	No	3	60%	27%	5%
<4y	Of the yes 100% worked in Iran			0%	0%			0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	Yes	2	100%	18%	3%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	Of the yes 100% worked in Iran			0%	0%			0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	4	100%	36%	7%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	3	38%	20%	5%	No	5	63%	33%	8%
>4<8 y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	3	100%	20%	5%
>8 years	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	4	100%	27%	7%
		3		20%	5%		12		80%	20%

**Table 20 Children Working in Iran**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	23	100%	68%	38%
>4<8 y	Yes	1	14%	3%	2%	No	6	86%	18%	10%
>8 years	Yes	1	25%	3%	2%	No	3	75%	9%	5%
		2		6%	3%		32		94%	53%
FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	1	20%	9%	2%	No	4	80%	36%	7%
>4<8 y	Yes	2	100%	18%	3%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Yes	1	25%	9%	2%	No	3	75%	27%	5%
		4		36%	7%		7		64%	12%

**Table 21 Mobility in Iran**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
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<4y	No	10	43%	29%	17%	Yes	13	57%	38%	22%
>4<8 y	No	2	29%	6%	3%	Yes	5	71%	15%	8%
>8 years	No	1	25%	3%	2%	Yes	3	75%	9%	5%
		13		38%	22%		21		62%	35%
FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	3	60%	27%	5%	Yes	2	40%	18%	3%
>4<8 y	No	1	50%	9%	2%	Yes	1	50%	9%	2%
>8 years	No	1	25%	9%	2%	Yes	3	75%	27%	5%
		5		45%	8%		6		55%	10%
Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	2	25%	13%	3%	Yes	6	75%	40%	10%
>4<8 y	No	1	33%	7%	2%	Yes	2	67%	13%	3%
>8 years	No	0	0%	0%	0%	Yes	4	100%	27%	7%
		3		20%	5%		12		80%	20%

**Table 22 Mobility in Afghanistan**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	17	74%	50%	28%	No	3	13%	9%	5%
<4y										
>4<8 y	Yes	2	29%	6%	3%	No	4	57%	12%	7%
>4<8 y										
>8 years	Yes	1	25%	3%	2%	No	2	50%	6%	3%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	3	60%	27%	5%	No	2	40%	18%	3%
<4y										
>4<8 y	Yes	2	100%	18%	3%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Yes	2	50%	18%	3%	No	2	50%	18%	3%
>8 years										

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	3	38%	20%	5%	No	2	13%	13%	3%
<4y										
>4<8 y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	2	67%	13%	3%
>4<8 y										
>8 years	Yes	1	25%	7%	2%	No	3	75%	20%	5%

	Married	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample	FHH	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Don't	3	13%	9%	5%	Don't	0	0%	0%	0%

	know					know				
<b>&lt;4y</b>	The 'no's also had no mobility in Iran					2 'no's had no mobility in Iran				
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Don't know	1	14%	3%	2%	Don't know	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	1 no had no mobility in Iran					Don't know	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Don't know	1	25%	3%	2%	The 'no's had mobility in Iran				

	Child	No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Don't know	3	38%	20%	5%
<b>&lt;4y</b>	The 'no's also had no mobility in Iran				
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Don't know	1	33%	7%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	1 no had no mobility in Iran				
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Don't know	0	0%	0%	0%

**Table 23 The Burqa**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Dislike	7	30%	21%	12%	Like	16	70%	47%	27%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Dislike	4	57%	12%	7%	Like	3	43%	9%	5%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Dislike	3	75%	9%	5%	Like	1	25%	3%	2%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Dislike	1	20%	9%	2%	Like	4	80%	36%	7%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Dislike	0	0%	0%	0%	Like	2	100%	18%	3%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Dislike	2	50%	18%	3%	Like	2	50%	18%	3%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Dislike	7	88%	47%	12%	Like	1	13%	7%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Dislike	2	67%	13%	3%	Like	1	33%	7%	2%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Dislike	4	100%	27%	7%	Like	0	0%	0%	0%

**Table 24 Literacy**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
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<4y	Yes	1 <sup>21</sup>	4%	3%	2%	No	22	96%	65%	37%
>4<8 y	Yes	3	43%	9%	5%	No	4	57%	12%	7%
>8 years	Yes	2	50%	6%	3%	No	2	50%	6%	3%
		6		18%	10%		28		83%	47%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	5	100%	45%	8%
>4<8 y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	2	100%	18%	3%
>8 years	Yes	1	25%	9%	2%	No	3	75%	27%	5%
		1		9%	2%		10		91%	17%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	5 <sup>22</sup>	63%	33%	8%	No	3	38%	20%	5%
>4<8 y	Yes	2	67%	13%	3%	No	1	33%	7%	2%
>8 years	Yes	4	100%	27%	7%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
		11		73%	18%		4		27%	7%

**Table 25 Study in Iran**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	23	100%	68%	38%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	No	5	71%	15%	8%	Yes	2	29%	6%	3%
>8 years	No	2	50%	6%	3%	Yes	2	50%	6%	3%
		30		88%	50%		4		12%	7%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	5	100%	45%	8%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	No	2	100%	18%	3%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	No	2	50%	18%	3%	Yes	2	50%	18%	3%
		9		82%	15%		2		18%	3%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	6	75%	40%	10%	Yes	2	25%	13%	3%
>4<8 y	No	1	33%	7%	2%	Yes	2	67%	13%	3%
>8 years	No	0	0%	0%	0%	Yes	4	100%	27%	7%
		7		47%	12%		8		53%	13%

**Table 26 Sending Children to School in Iran**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
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<sup>21</sup> Studied at mosque school.

<sup>22</sup> Two studied at home using textbooks, two studied at school and one studied at mosque school.

<b>&lt;4y</b>	Yes	4	17%	12%	7%	No	16	70%	47%	27%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Yes	4	57%	12%	7%	No	2	29%	6%	3%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Yes	1	25%	3%	2%	No	2	50%	6%	3%
		9		27%	16%		20		59%	

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Too young for school	3	13%	9%	5%	Mosque school for girls	1	4%	3%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Too young for school	1	14%	3%	2%	Mosque school for girls	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Too young for school	1	25%	3%	2%	Mosque school for girls	0	0%	0%	0%
		5		15%	9%		1		3%	2%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Mosque school for boys	1	4%	3%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Mosque school for boys	1	14%	3%	2%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Mosque school for boys	0	0%	0%	0%
		2		6%	4%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	5	100%	45%	8%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	2	100%	18%	3%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Yes	3	75%	27%	5%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
		3		27%	5%		7		63%	11%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Too young for	0	0%	0%	0%	Mosque school	0	0%	0%	0%



	school					for girls				
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Too young for school	0	0%	0%	0%	Mosque school for girls	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Too young for school	1	25%	9%	2%	Mosque school for girls	0	0%	0%	0%
		1		9%	2%		0		0%	0%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Mosque school for boys	1	20%	7%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Mosque school for boys	1	50%	7%	2%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Mosque school for boys	1	25%	7%	2%
		1		21%	6%

**Table 27 Health Care in Iran**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Yes	17	74%	50%	28%	No	6	26%	18%	10%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Yes	7	100%	21%	12%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Yes	4	100%	12%	7%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
		28		82%	47%		6		18%	10%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Yes	4	80%	36%	7%	No	1	20%	9%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Yes	1	50%	9%	2%	No	1	50%	9%	2%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Yes	4	100%	36%	7%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
		9		82%	16%		2		18%	4%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Yes	7	88%	47%	12%	No	1	13%	7%	2%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Yes	3	100%	20%	5%	No	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8</b>	Yes	4	100%	27%	7%	No	0	0%	0%	0%

<b>years</b>										
		14		93%	23%		1		7%	2%

**Table 28 Location of birth and attendant at birth**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4 yrs</b>	Afghan dayeh	5	22%	15%	8%	At home	8	35%	24%	13%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Afghan dayeh	0	0%	0%	0%	At home	2	29%	6%	3%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	Afghan dayeh	0	0%	0%	0%	At home	0	0%	0%	0%
		5		15%	8%		10		29%	17%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4 yrs</b>	hospital	2	9%	6%	3%	Iranian	3	13%	9%	5%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	hospital	1	14%	3%	2%	Iranian	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	hospital	2	50%	6%	3%	Iranian	0	0%	0%	0%
		5		15%	8%		3		9%	5%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4 yrs</b>	No birth	5	22%	15%	8%	hospital and home	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	No birth	2	29%	6%	3%	hospital and home	2	29%	6%	3%
<b>&gt;8 years</b>	No birth	1	25%	3%	2%	hospital and home	1	25%	3%	2%
		8		24%	13%		3		9%	5%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<b>&lt;4y</b>	Afghan dayeh	2	40%	18%	3%	At home	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;4&lt;8 y</b>	Afghan dayeh	1	50%	9%	2%	At home	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>&gt;8</b>	Afghan	0	0%	0%	0%	At	1	25%	9%	2%

years	dayeh					home				
		3		27%	5%		1		9%	2%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	hospital	0	0%	0%	0%	Iranian	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	hospital	0	0%	0%	0%	Iranian	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	hospital	2	50%	18%	3%	Iranian	0	0%	0%	0%
		2		18%	3%		0		0%	0%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No birth	3	60%	20%	5%	Hospital and home	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	No birth	1	50%	7%	2%	Hospital and home	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	No birth	1	25%	7%	2%	Hospital and home	0	0%	0%	0%
		5		33%	8%		0		0%	0%

**Table 29 Contraception**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes <sup>23</sup>	5	22%	15%	8%	No	12	52%	35%	20%
>4<8 y	Yes	3	43%	9%	5%	No	2	29%	6%	3%
>8 years	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	2	50%	6%	3%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Injection	3	13%	9%	5%	Pill	3	13%	9%	5%
>4<8 y	Injection	1	14%	3%	2%	Pill	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Injection	0	0%	0%	0%	Pill	1	25%	3%	2%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y				0%	0%
>4<8 y	Tubes tied	1	14%	3%	2%
>8 years	Tubes tied	1	25%	3%	2%

FHH		No.	% of year	% of	% of		No.	% of year	% of the	% of
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<sup>23</sup> Type of contraception unspecified.

			and sub group	the sub group	sample			and sub group	sub group	sample
<4y	Injection	1	20%	9%	2%	Pill	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	Injection	0	0%	0%	0%	Pill	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Injection	0	0%	0%	0%	Pill	1	25%	9%	2%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	4	80%	36%	7%
>4<8 y	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	2	100%	18%	3%
>8 years	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%	No	2	50%	18%	3%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Tubes tied	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	Tubes tied	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Tubes tied	1	25%	7%	2%

**Table 30 Differential Treatment in Health Care in Iran**

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	None	17	74%	50%	28%	NA <sup>24</sup>	6	26%	18%	10%
>4<8 y	None	7	100%	21%	12%	NA	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	None	3	75%	9%	5%	NA	0	0%	0%	0%
		27		79%	45%		6		18%	10%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	None	4	80%	36%	7%	NA	1	20%	9%	2%
>4<8 y	None	1	50%	9%	2%	NA	1	50%	9%	2%
>8 years	None	3	75%	27%	5%	NA	0	0%	0%	0%
		8		73%	13%		2		18%	3%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	None	7	47%	12%	88%	NA	1	13%	7%	2%
>4<8 y	None	3	20%	5%	100%	NA	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	None	4	27%	7%	100%	NA	0	0%	0%	0%
		14	93%	23%			1		7%	2%

**Table 31 Availability of Health Care in Afghanistan**

Married		No.	% of year	% of the	% of		No.	% of year	% of the	% of
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<sup>24</sup> NA = Not Applicable

			and sub group	sub group	sample			and sub group	sub group	sample
<4y	Don't know	5	22%	15%	8%	Yes	13	57%	38%	22%
>4<8 y	Don't know	3	43%	9%	5%	Yes	3	43%	9%	5%
>8 years	Don't know	1	25%	3%	2%	Yes	2	50%	6%	3%
		9		26%	15%		18		53%	30%

Married		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	5	22%	15%	8%
>4<8 y	No	1	14%	3%	2%
>8 years	No	1	25%	3%	2%
		7		21%	12%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Don't know	2	40%	18%	3%	Yes	3	60%	27%	5%
>4<8 y	Don't know	0	0%	0%	0%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Don't know	0	0%	0%	0%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
		2		18%	3%		3		27%	5%

FHH		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	No	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	No	2	100%	18%	3%
>8 years	No	4	100%	36%	7%
		6		55%	10%

Child		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample		No.	% of year and sub group	% of the sub group	% of sample
<4y	Don't know	8	100%	53%	13%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	Don't know	3	100%	20%	5%	Yes	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	Don't know	1	25%	7%	2%	Yes	3	75%	20%	5%
		12		80%	20%		3		20%	5%

Child		No.	% of year	% of the	% of
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			and sub group	sub group	sample
<4y	No	0	0%	0%	0%
>4<8 y	No	0	0%	0%	0%
>8 years	No	0	0%	0%	0%
		0		0%	0%

## **Appendix F - Organisations Interviewed**

- Ockenden International  
Zemarai Baqi – Programme Manager

### **Assistance to Communities**

- Location: Injeel district
- Integrated community development programme
- For women: skills training (carpet weaving, tailoring, TBA training, credit)
- Discrete women's focus groups with plans to turn these into women's shuras
- Every 15 days female staff have meetings with beneficiaries
- Some support to home-based schools of which there are around 300 in Injeel
- Health education

### **Gender**

- They have a team of 6 female staff operating in Injeel District
- Staff received gender awareness training from CCA

### **Assistance in Relation to Drought**

- Distributed family tents

- NPO/RRAA  
Alam Mohammad Admin Manager

### **Assistance to Communities**

- Technical training project for the disabled
- Credit and skills training for women
- Running clinics and TBA training – 36 days theoretical and 6 months practical training
- Different training system from UNICEF and WHO
- Location: Kushk-e Robot-e Sangi.
- Future plans: mobile vaccination teams in co-ordination with UNICEF
- Christianaid may fund four clinics in Badghis Province

### **Gender**

- Staff have received gender awareness training

### **Assistance in Relation to Drought**

- Have submitted proposals for FFW for karez cleaning

- CHA  
Mohammad Sarwar Yusufi - Regional Manager

### **Assistance to Communities**

- Location: Shindand, Farah, Ghor, Parchaman
- Vocational training, agriculture, education, health, infrastructure
- Vocational training for women is in carpet weaving, tailoring, embroidery, agriculture: kitchen gardening, health: TBA training
- There was English and computer training for women before Taliban came

- Vocational training is targeting returnee women because they are cleverer and more hard working

### **Gender**

- Staff have received gender training

### **Assistance in Relation to Drought**

- In 1999, 712 MT was sent to Ghor in winter
- Have given proposals for FFW for canal cleaning and for road building for 2000

- AREA

### **Assistance to Communities**

- Location: Injeel district
- Injeel was part of communist security belt, high rate of refugee return
- Seeing impact after a long time
- Long term funding from Christian Aid for Injeel Zindajan and Badghis
- No women in survey team for Badghis
- Have asked for NPO/RRAA's help in this regard
- Integrated community development programme
- Soap-making, knitting cardigans, now for time being involving women
- Micro-credit and solar cookers funded by Christianaid
- One criteria is that creditor should be skilled
- Failed to adequately mobilise men and women, have hired couple mobilizer
- Primary education for group leaders who are illiterate
- Also primary health education
- Information on how to use credit properly, how to use income
- 2 female mobilisers for usage and maintenance of cookers, primary health education, general awareness
- Mine awareness, health education, environmental awareness, became primary health education
- Decreased number of subjects taught as women not willing to participate
- 15 days, one message each day in one village and after 15 days they can evaluate performance
- 20 mobilisers work in Injeel – will phase out from Injeel

### **Gender**

- Gender workshops held in CHA under NOVIB programme
- Send any info on problems facing Afghan women
- Gender equity is a policy
- Women are involved in each project

### **Assistance in Relation to Drought**

- Muslim Aid – London based –14 hand pumps to be installed for drought affected
- Possibly. 4 semi-deep wells for drinking and irrigation in Herat province

- SIEAL  
Farid Ahmad



### **Assistance to Communities**

- Will set up orphanage for boys
- Have contacted traders in relation to apprenticeships
- Herat: no programmes with women and girls
- Interested in programme but authorities do not agree
- Interested in providing vocational training for women in districts in tailoring, flower making, and basic education programme
- Plans to provide materials for vocational training
- Donors do not agree because of reluctance from authorities
- Situation may ease in 6 months' time
- Letter from Mullah Omar has stated that home-based schools and HABITAT's community for a should be closed
- Publications for children, youth and students
- Distribution of text books and teaching materials to home-based schools in Herat
- Previously set up art and sports teams for boys

### **Appendix G – List of Abbreviations used in this Report**

AREA	Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan
BAFIA	Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MDM	Medecins Du Monde
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NPO/RRAA	Norwegian Project Office
SIEAL	Sanayee Institute of Education and Learning
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

### **Appendix H – Itinerary**

Wednesday, July 26th	Leave Peshawar for Islamabad. Flight to Herat
Thursday, July 27th	Meetings with IOM staff, UNHCR staff, Minister of Planning and Minister of Martyrs and Refugees. Visit to GTC transit camp
Friday, July 28th	Drive to Injeel District. Parwaneh village, interview 4 women
Saturday, July 29th	Day off
Sunday, July 30th	Drive to Gozara District. Interview 3 women in Siyahshah Village. Interview 4 women in Mahale Baburia Village
Monday, July 31st	Drive to Gozara District. Interview 11 women in Ziyaratjah Village
Tuesday, August 1st	Drive to Gozara District. Interview 12 women in Ziyaratjah Village
Wednesday, August 2nd	Drive to Injeel District. Interview 12 women in Sakhsalma Village

Thursday, August 3rd	Drive to Injeel District. Interview 14 women in Sakhsalma Village
Friday, August 4th	Meeting with UNHCR staff. Visit Minaret IDP camp and talk with female IDPs
Saturday, August 5th	Interviews with staff from Ockenden International, AREA, NPO/RRAA, CHA and SIEAL
Sunday, August 6th	Fly Herat to Islamabad