

A young girl wearing a grey headscarf is looking directly at the camera while writing in a notebook. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other people. The text is overlaid in a bright yellow color.

Supporting Afghan Students in Schools & Youth Programs

RISE

International Rescue Committee
Refugee Integration in South East England



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Introduction



In the 2021-22 school year and beyond, schools across the United Kingdom will enroll significant numbers of Afghan children and youth displaced as a result of the fall of the Afghan government to the Taliban.

While many schools and communities have a long history of welcoming refugee and immigrant students, educators and school districts may want to do additional preparation given the large number of arriving students and recent traumatic events.

This brief is designed to assist that preparation, including assisting educators to:

- Develop a well-rounded understanding of the circumstances of newly arrived Afghan students and their families and the challenges they may face as they seek to adapt to the British education system
- Better understand the Afghan educational systems and likely educational experiences of students
- Increase awareness of the warning signs of trauma responses that students may exhibit
- Offer core considerations in working with students and their families
- Offer key skills and strategies that may be helpful in working with students and families
- Provide links to more information and resources



Afghans in the United Kingdom

More than four decades of conflict have resulted in over two million Afghans fleeing their country and more than four million displaced within its borders. Between January and mid-September of this year, more than 665,000 people in Afghanistan were forced to flee their homes.¹

15,000 people were evacuated from Afghanistan to the UK by 29 August 2021. The process was chaotic and confused. Those evacuated included British nationals and people who qualified under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP)² and Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme (ACRS)³ schemes or the other criteria set by the government, some who did qualify did not make or receive a "call forward" or were physically unable to make their way into the airport and onto the aircraft. Evacuees were transferred to temporary bridging hotels while local authorities sought permanent housing. All of those who were evacuated will be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

11,000 Afghan evacuees remained in hotels at the end of October 2021⁴, in addition to 13,000 asylum seekers housed in hotels. Currently, there are no guidelines to advise different service providers on how to support Afghan Evacuees to access services. This coupled with the limited housing stock in the local authorities and the reluctance of some local authorities to enroll Afghan students in local schools with no assurance that they will be housed locally has caused delays in registering Afghan children into local schools.



Because of the recent and rapid pace of the evacuations, there is not in-depth information currently available about the demographics, educational histories, and life experiences of families that will be joining our communities.

¹ Source OCHA: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/idps>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

⁴ Hansard, October 25, 2021 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-25/debates/186CFEC9-FDDD-4B1B-9E17-9A0C51DB606B/AfghanCitizensResettlementScheme>

Brief Overview of Education in Afghanistan

The Education System

The Afghan national education system includes primary education (grades 1-6), secondary education (grades 7-12), vocational education, and religious education.

Compulsory education ends at grade 6. At the end of grade 6, students take a national examination to gain admission to lower secondary level at grade 7.

The first cycle (grades 1-3) focuses on religious studies, first language (Dari or Pashto), maths, art, and physical education. The second cycle (grades 4-6) includes the same subjects as cycle 1, but adds science, history, geography, and second language (Dari or Pashto depending on the region). Many children also attend Madrassas, which are also overseen by the Ministry of Education, where they focus on religious studies.

Secondary education consists of two three-year cycles. The first cycle from grades 7-9 is referred to as lower secondary, and the second, from grades 10-12, is referred to as higher secondary. The curriculum of the first cycle includes subjects like religious studies, local language, maths, social sciences, foreign language (e.g. English, German, French, or Russian) and physical education. National exams at grade 9 determine who can progress into higher secondary education. Depending on students' score, they can go (advance) into higher secondary (academic) or technical and vocational school at this time. National graduation exams at the end of Grade 12 are administered for national certificates.

Though the vast majority of Afghan students in school attend public schools, there is a growing network of private schools operating at the national level, primarily focused on the larger cities or provincial capitals of the country, with the highest concentration found in Kabul. In addition, since 2010, there has been a growth in a new model of Community Based Education (CBE) centers, primarily established by international and national NGOs. These CBE centers are primary education centers established inside and close to communities, in shared spaces, and seek to reduce distance barriers facing many remote and inaccessible communities. CBE centers are linked to the closest formal education school so that children can be transitioned into formal education after the first and second cycles.

Schools in Afghanistan follow two separate academic calendars- one for "warm climate" provinces, and one for "cold climate" provinces. This allows for continuity of learning based on seasons and when schools are accessible to children. Cold weather climate schools (including in Kabul and Northern provinces) operate normally from March to December, with holidays during the coldest months of the year (January and February). Warm weather climate schools (including in warmer southern provinces such as Helmand and Kandahar) normally run from September to June, with schools closed during the hottest months of the year.

The primary school day in Afghanistan is 3 hours and 25 minutes long. The secondary school day is typically 4 hours long.⁵

¹ The World Bank, p. 4.

Educational Access

While educational access has improved significantly since 2001, it remains limited. In addition to security concerns, conflict and displacement, migration and natural disasters, poverty, lack of school buildings and teacher shortages, transportation and distance, and gender norms present barriers. Before the current crisis, up to half of all children were not enrolled in school, and approximately 60% of these out-of-school students were girls.⁶ Further, students with special needs are unlikely to have had access to specialized classes.⁷



Early Childhood Education

Very few Afghan children (~1%) have had access to formal early childhood education.⁸ There is no public early childhood education. Some children from urban areas may have attended private Kindergarten.



Primary School

Children are most likely to have participated in primary education (equivalent to year 1-6). Girls from rural conservative areas, children from rural and/or insecure areas, children from nomadic or poor families, and children from families where the head of household has no formal education, and working children are the most likely to have been out-of-school.⁹



Secondary School

Youth may or may not have participated in secondary level schooling (years 7-12). Recent statistics suggest that only half of females and two thirds of males attend at the lower school level (7-9), and even fewer continue on to upper school 10-12.¹⁰

⁶ UNICEF. Global Initiative on Out of School Children, 2018.

⁷ The World Bank, p. 9.

⁸ UNICEF. Global Initiative on Out of School Children, 2018.

⁹ UNICEF. Global Initiative on Out of School Children, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁰ UNESCO p. 17.

Language

There are over 30 languages spoken in Afghanistan, but the vast majority of the population speak either Dari or Pashto. Approximately 5% of Afghans speak English.¹¹ Dari and Pashto are the official languages of instruction in the Afghan public education system. Which language is used for instruction depends on which is the dominant local language; both are not used at the same time. Students typically begin learning the non-dominant language (Dari or Pashto) starting in grade 4. Speakers of minority languages are unlikely to have had specialized support to acquire the language of instruction and integrate into the national education system.

Educational Outcomes

Along with enrollment, learning outcomes have also improved in recent decades. However, they still vary greatly. According to the World Bank, approximately 55% of male and 30% of female Afghans age 15+ are literate.¹² Educators should understand that many students may come with no formal education or present several years below grade level standards. For example, after four years of primary school, only two-thirds of Afghan students have fully mastered the language curriculum for the first grade, and less than half have mastered the maths curriculum for the first grade.¹³ Overall, girls have lower rates of literacy and familiarity with educational instruction.

¹¹ US Central Intelligence Agency: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/afghanistan/#people-and-society>

¹² The World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.MA.ZS?locations=AF>

¹³ Trako & Molina. The World Bank. The Learning Crisis in Afghanistan. 2019.

Students' Educational Experience

Type of Instruction

Afghan formal classrooms typically focus on whole group instruction. Levels of teacher education and training vary, but it is not uncommon for teachers to have less than a high school education, themselves. Therefore teaching strategies are somewhat limited and **lecture-based instruction is the norm**. Students are expected to memorize and recall a great deal of information. Students may be used to teachers asking the same question several times to multiple students with the intent that all can be successful in responding to the question. Thus, many students may have strong **listening and memorization skills**, and may be **used to copying notes from the board** or lectures with attention to penmanship.

Many instructional techniques common in the United Kingdom are likely to be totally unfamiliar to newly arrived Afghans. Small group work and center-based instruction is not common. Students may or may not have had teachers that use techniques like inviting the student to the blackboard, checking their performance individually, or calling the students by their names.¹⁴ Similarly, **activities that require critical thinking or student-led learning are likely to be unfamiliar**. Students are also unlikely to have had any experience with digital literacy beyond basic web browsing and social media on mobile-phones. Afghan youth are not expected to have sufficient computer skills to complete tasks such as completing presentations, writing papers or doing academic research. **Digital skills are not typically taught or required until they enter higher education.**

¹⁴ The World Bank, p. 9.

Classroom Resources

Schools also vary in levels of resources available. While nearly all primary classrooms are equipped with blackboards and chalk or markers, less than half have desks and chairs. Most students have access to textbooks, but classroom libraries are rare. Further only some classrooms include

educational wall displays.¹⁵ Schools in the capital city of Kabul and other provincial capitals are generally much better equipped than in more rural areas. Students are unlikely to have had access to computers or other digital technology in school.

Interrupted Education is Common

Conflict and displacement has been interrupting Afghan children and youth's education for generations with critical impacts on education access and quality. While the former Government of Afghanistan made great strides in improving education since 2001, **access and quality remain limited**. In addition to security concerns, conflict and displacement, migration and natural disasters, poverty, building and teacher shortages, transportation and distance, and gender norms present barriers. **Before the current crisis, an estimated 2-3 million (and up to half of all children) were not enrolled in school.** Since the Taliban takeover, more families are opting out of sending their children to school, with females disproportionately impacted, especially those over primary education ages.

¹⁵ The World Bank, p. 8.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has further interrupted Afghan students' education. During the initial outbreak of COVID-19, all schools in Afghanistan were closed for 6 months. Few students had access to remote learning, especially children in more rural areas. Many suffered significant learning loss and many dropped out of school. Although schools in Afghanistan reopened after COVID-19 closures, in the lead up to the collapse of the Afghan Government, escalating conflict in many provinces resulted in many children continuing to go without schooling.

Caregiver Involvement



Afghans have a strong tradition of consultative community engagement with schooling, much like parent teacher association (PTA) structures in the West. Shura is an Arabic word for “consultation,” with the Quran encouraging Muslims to decide on affairs in consultation with one another. School Management Shuras have played an important role in the delivery of education in Afghanistan for decades, providing management of and supervision support to both formal schools and community-based education centers. School Management Shuras are typically single-sex, especially in rural/conservative areas, but have been expanded in recent years to ensure female participation and voice. School Management Shura meetings take place on a regular, monthly basis, in which issues and challenges facing the school are discussed and decided upon.

Common ways that caregivers support their children's education at home include teaching them values, behaviors, and skills to carry over from home to school. These included the need for getting a good education and working hard to obtain this, and respecting the authority of teachers. Caregivers also emphasize the importance of being kind and noble with everyone they meet.



Considerations for Working with Afghan Students & Families

Each individual family is unique

Afghanistan's population and cultures are diverse, with different ethnicities, languages, and distinctive experiences. In addition, each family will have its own distinctive make-up, family beliefs and goals, and each person in the family is likely to have their own individual beliefs, goals, and temperament. Families and individuals also change over time, evolving as people adapt to their communities, age, learn new information, and have new experiences. While having a general understanding of culture and context is important, it is no substitute for getting to know an individual and family. Educators should strive to be curious, while also respecting that individuals are the most reliable reporters of their history and reality, and are best placed to determine which programs and resources meet their needs.

“It’s our choice and our right to go to school, to get an education. It’s important to give yourself hopes and dreams.”

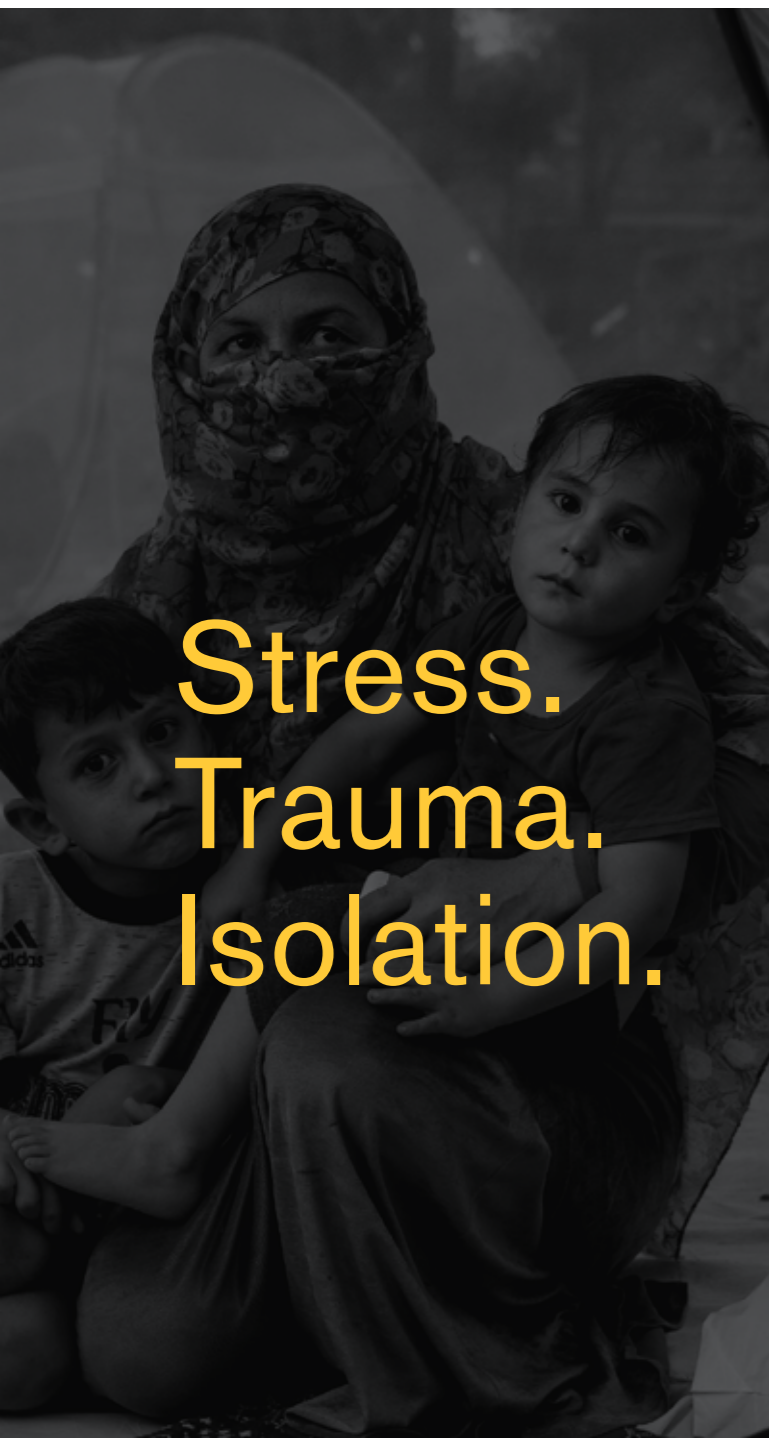
—14-year-old girl from Kabul

Every individual and family has important strengths

All people have inherent strengths including lived experience, talents, knowledge, and resiliency.

Because of language and cultural differences, as well as what may be limited educational experience, many new students from Afghanistan may understandably feel insecure about their educational preparedness or intelligence. Their first experience with the U.K. educational system may either reinforce this belief or do the opposite — increase a child or youth’s sense of confidence and competence. It is critical that educators understand the important role they play, and whenever possible, should seek to recognize and promote strengths while also amplifying assets, as opposed to deficits. Helping students to leverage the knowledge and skill sets they have developed will go a long way to supporting their development of new knowledge and skills and increase their motivation to succeed and advance educationally.

Children, youth and families may have had significant traumatic experiences



**Stress.
Trauma.
Isolation.**

Afghanistan has endured many decades of conflict that preceded the recent evacuation. Making it to the United Kingdom meant a harrowing journey to the Kabul airport before being evacuated to the UK, then quarantining in quarantine hotels, transferred to temporary bridging hotels before finally being transferred to the community where they will reside permanently. Each step of the journey to a UK classroom has been challenging, and children and families may still be processing this experience. In addition, many left loved ones behind and are worried about their continued safety.

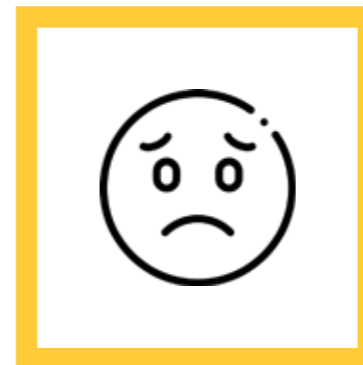
Educators should be grounded in the belief that all people have the capacity for resilience and recovery, while also recognizing that exposure to trauma and toxic stress can have detrimental impacts on people's health, development and well-being, whether it be short- or long-term.

Educators should be aware that Afghan students may experience and/or display symptoms that are related to trauma and toxic stress.



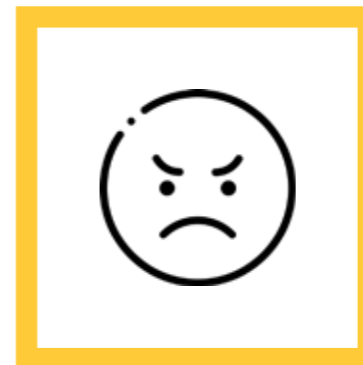
Cognitive

Students are likely to have erroneous self-beliefs, reduced trust in others, distorted self-image, & a disrupted healthy attachment.



Affective

Students will demonstrate fear, sadness, anger, anxiety, and poor ability to manage emotional response.



Behavioral

Student's maladaptive behaviors can include, bullying, avoidance, anger outbursts, self-injury, etc.

Common student responses to high stress and/or trauma

Cognitive	Physiological	Emotional
Dissociation	Rapid heart rate	Persistent anxious feelings
Memory Impairment	Gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., pain, diarrhea, vomiting)	Agitation or irritability
Poor concentration	Frequent Illness	Depression or apathy
Flashbacks/Nightmares	Inability to Rest	Panic/Paranoia/Terror
Negative self-belief/image	Fatigue/Muscle tremors	Feelings of hopelessness
Reduced trust in caretakers	Visual difficulties	Shame/Guilt
Difficulty making decisions/solving problems	Hypervigilance	Grief or Sadness
Hypervigilance	Changes in appetite	Feeling numb

Behavioral	Social/Spiritual
Avoidance of people, places, thoughts, memories or feelings	Loss of meaning
Engagement in risky behavior	Doubt/Emptiness
Aggressiveness/Outbursts	Cynicism
Poor impulse control	Isolation
Risk-taking	Lack of empathy
Sexual acting out	Inflexibility
Difficulty regulating emotions	Apathy
Poor academic engagement	Crisis of faith

Educators should prioritize the restoration of physical, psychological and emotional safety, as well as a sense of self-efficacy and control. This includes ensuring the provision of safe and healing classrooms (see below in approaches), while also being prepared to make appropriate referrals to professionals with specialized expertise. Schools and programs utilizing multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to support students' academic and behavioral success may anticipate more students requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.¹⁶

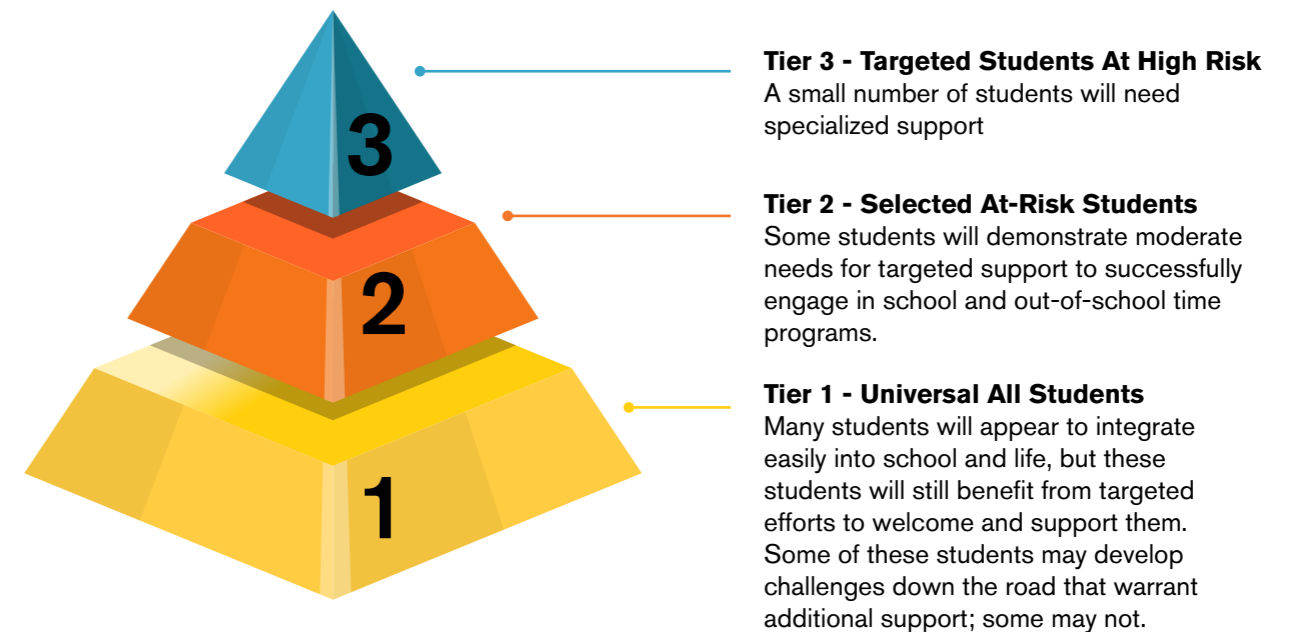


Figure 1. Welcoming Students Affected by Forced Migration, a tiered understanding

While caregivers are likely to highly value school and education, they may find it difficult to engage at a high level with school and youth program personnel, particularly during the next year. In addition, families are likely to experience challenging dynamics in the months and years ahead as children often acclimate faster to life in the United Kingdom than adult family members. Targeted efforts may be required to support communication and engagement, and educators should be patient and persistent in their engagement efforts. Due to cultural preferences, male members of the family are likely to be the one engaging with school personnel with very little involvement from the female members, unless the staff is of opposite gender.

¹⁶ For more on MTSS frameworks see: <https://mtss4success.org/essential-components>. Many US states have their own MTSS frameworks. MTSS frameworks typically integrate [Response to Intervention](#) approaches and [Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports](#) (PBIS).

Afghan cultural norms may impact engagement with schools and youth programs

While many people, especially those living in Kabul, have embraced liberal Western principles of women's rights in education and the workforce, Afghanistan remains a profoundly conservative nation with prescriptive cultural norms related to gender and a high priority placed on family and community responsibilities.¹⁷ Female family members typically have significantly more responsibilities inside the home, and males outside the home in the community.

These family and community responsibilities may conflict with expectations of schools and other service providers. For example, many girls will continue their tradition of having chores and household work before and after school. This may make completing homework more difficult for girls than boys. Boys, however, may have the responsibility of helping elderly family or community members, such as by accompanying them to appointments that will also reduce their time to study.

Further, without specific consideration and accommodation for families' priorities and concerns, Afghan girls, in particular, may have more difficulty accessing school and out-of-school time programming or other opportunities because of cultural beliefs and/or fears for their safety. Families may not be comfortable with female family members traveling alone and may prefer that male family members who speak more English interpret for female family members. Because it is highly uncommon for Afghan girls to leave the house overnight, overnight school trips will come with great hesitation by the male family members. Talking with and providing reassurance to caregivers will increase the chance of the student being allowed to participate.

¹⁷ Culture can be defined in many different ways. For this brief, culture is defined as the knowledge, attitudes, artifacts, beliefs, roles, languages, customs, world views, and historical contexts that are shared by a group of people. People can be part of multiple cultures at one time. For example, someone could be part of their ethnic culture while also being part of a religious culture that might differ from others who share that ethnicity.

Approaches To Welcome & Support Afghan Students

In this section, you will find actionable information to guide you, your colleagues, and your staff to create a welcoming, inclusive, culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining, and healing environment for Afghan and other newcomer students who have experienced forced migration.

It is impossible to detail an exact approach to educational programming that would honor the many different cultural identities of Afghanistan. However, there are some guiding principles that can be helpful, including:



Engage
with cultural humility
and responsiveness



Ensure
linguistic and
religious access



Respect
cultural differences

Build rapport and trusting relationships with students and families

Supporting Afghan and other students affected by forced migration starts with forging relationships with families and their children based on trust and mutual respect - at both the individual and school/program levels. Introduce yourself and your role in the school or program community. Emphasize your desire to help every student to succeed. Be curious about your students and their families, their goals, and the things they care about. Make gestures each day communicating that you see and value them. Prepare to respectfully engage with students and their caregivers around concerns such as a daughters' participation in after school programming, while also respecting family decisions.

Culturally responsive school/program-level strategies that build trust and rapport with Afghan families

- Make interpretation readily available and delivered by adults at all times
- Especially early on, coordinate such that outreach to female family members is done by female staff.
- Assign each student one teacher/advisor/mentor that each student can go to at all times with questions, concerns, or just to talk.
- Share information about opportunities and accommodations available for students to adhere to cultural and religious traditions and obligations, and how to access these. Explore if more are needed. For example:
 - › Appropriate spaces and time for Muslim students to pray
 - › Availability of Halal food
 - › Accommodations to school/program uniform/dress codes in order to follow their preferred attire, such as wearing long trousers rather than shorts/skirts.
- Provide activities aimed at the entire family in order to promote better engagement and relationship building between families and schools/staff.
- Plan for extra time to talk with caregivers about extracurricular activities, address their concerns, and provide reassurance in order to increase the chances of the student, especially girls, being allowed to participate.
- If you have a number of Afghan families coming to your school or school district, consider inquiring whether caregivers would like to participate in gender-specific meetings or focus groups to share information about the community's strengths, needs, and how to best support and engage them and students. Ask caregivers if they would like to co-facilitate such meetings with school personnel. Ensure Dari/Pashto interpretation will be provided as needed.
- Consider doing home visits rather than asking families to come into the office in order to communicate school expectations for students and opportunities for family engagement (e.g., school town halls, parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher associations, etc.). If the family works with a resettlement agency, consider involving their caseworker, school liaison, or other relevant staff member.
- Consider home visits to have sensitive conversations with caregivers and students, such as around mental health concerns, attendance or academic issues, etc.
- Consider creating an affinity group for Afghan students and families where learning and resource sharing among families could be facilitated.

Focus on strengths and be creative and open to student learning styles



Educators should not only be looking for strengths but also finding opportunities for students to display existing competencies. Allowing students who are not literate in English or are pre-literate to display their skills in other ways can be extremely valuable. Allowing them to draw, sing, write, or record poetry in their language, teach others about their culture or something they are good at, can all be valuable ways to promote self-esteem and belonging. Being in

charge of important tasks like leading the line, collecting homework, etc. can also display your sense of confidence in a child's opportunities. It is also important to notice and point out to student's strengths and skills that you see. When you point these out to students, be sure to make them specific so student's feel your praise is authentic. For example, instead of saying, "good work" say "I like the way you stuck with that maths problem until you came to a solution."

Create Healing Classrooms and Learning Spaces

When **supportive relationships** are coupled with **safe and supportive learning environments**, educators create the maximum opportunity for students — especially those recovering from traumatic events — to **learn, grow, and thrive**.



Sense of Control

Feeling safe and secure. Feeling your day is predictable – that you know what to expect and what is expected from you. Feeling you can influence what happens to you.



Sense of Self-Worth

Feeling capable, confident, and hopeful about having and being able to contribute to a positive future. Liking yourself, and having good self-esteem. Feeling able to achieve what you set out to do.



Sense of Belonging

Feeling included, cared for, and accepted. Feeling part of a group and valued by the community. Encouraging school clubs and sports will enhance this sense of belonging.



Positive Relationships

Having safe, stable connections with educators, staff, and other students, characterized by mutual respect, trust, transparency, and collaboration. Feeling seen, heard, understood, and valued.



Intellectual Stimulation

Understanding and seeing the value in the learning goals, feeling like you have agency in how to achieve them, and feeling appropriately challenged and that you are making progress. Able to connect new material to your existing knowledge and experience, see the relevance of the learning to your life, and have opportunities to learn in a variety of ways.

The following strategies help to create Healing Classroom & Learning Spaces:

Foster predictability and consistency

Students who have experienced severe adversity need a predictable environment in order to regain a sense of stability and control in their lives.

Meet students' emotional needs

Students first and foremost need to feel safe, supported, and valued in their learning environment so their brains can relax, take in and synthesize new information and take risks in order to develop new skills.

Use positive, empowering group management

Using clear expectations, positive classroom management strategies, and applying them consistently, equitably, and calmly helps students know how to be successful. Using restorative practices to manage conflict and giving students choices about how to self-regulate empowers them as members of the community.

Use spatial design to foster trauma-informed care principles

Proactively designing learning spaces to promote safety, transparency, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and mutuality, and empowerment help students feel safe, valued, and in control.

6 Healing Learning Space Strategies

- 1** Introduce students to the routines, expectations, key language, and ways of doing things that would be considered simple or routine tasks.
- 2** Promote student comfort and understanding by using trained adult interpreters or bilingual staff and make sure students know who they can go to with questions.
- 3** Integrate daily self-affirmations or self-compassion mindfulness exercises into your daily routine. Let students know when something out of the ordinary is going to occur and orient them to those events (e.g. bells, drills, special gatherings, outsider visits, etc.).
- 4** Let students know that it's okay to have trouble concentrating, feel overwhelmed or sad, etc. and let them know their options for when they need to step away and reset. Ask what strategies have worked for them and try to support those strategies.
- 5** Refine your learning space design to ensure it feels calm and organized and fosters student visibility, mobility, and personal space.
 - Post visual reminders of expectations and schedules to help students know what to expect throughout the day.
 - Ask students where and with whom they feel most comfortable sitting.
 - Have students help design installations of their work, items from home, or photos.
- 6** Talk to students about school clubs, sports, or other activities and encourage them to participate.

Suggested Steps To Prepare For New Arrivals

The following steps can help schools, school districts, and youth programs to prepare for newly arriving Afghan students and families, especially in the case of large numbers of arrivals.

Estimate the number of Afghan and other refugees, asylum-seekers, unaccompanied children students and families you may welcome and identify community-based supports

- Meet with your local resettlement, immigrant-serving organizations to learn about support available to new families and how schools and organizations can partner

Plan how to accommodate increase demand on student & family support services and how to support the staff who will engage the most with students and families, such as:

- Dari & Pashto interpretation & translation
- School enrollment, including:
 - › Procedures for supporting families who arrived without documentation such as school records
 - › Educational history, literacy and numeracy, and language proficiency assessment
- Literacy, numeracy & language screening
- ESOL services
- School social workers & psychologists
- Parent & community coordinators
- Digital inclusion supports
- After school & supplemental academic support
- Transportation



Provide staff time and resources to:

- Access trainings and learning resources on topics such as:
 - › Teaching and supporting students affected by forced migration, trauma, and with limited or interrupted education
 - › Psychological First Aid
 - › Integrating literacy and language support into general education classrooms
 - › Self-care and what to do if they experience vicarious trauma
- Plan, coordinate, and collaborate
 - › Strategies to welcome and build trusting relationships with families
 - › Strategies for improving welcoming & enhancing students' sense of belonging in school
 - › Language supports, scaffolding and differentiation techniques, SLIFE student supports, etc.
- Procure and create curricular and other resources, such as:
 - › Dari-English & Pashto-English bilingual books
 - › Dari-English & Pashto-English bilingual dictionaries, flashcards, labels
 - › English picture dictionaries
 - › Curricular resources for students to learn about Afghanistan and their new Afghan classmates

Selected Resources for Educators & Children and Youth Program Providers

Sources for Educator Trainings & Professional Development

- [Toxic Stress & Student Well-Being Among Students Affected by Forced Migration](#) — International Rescue Committee's self-paced e-course
- [Supporting Afghan Students in School](#) — A recorded webinar from Refugee Education
- [Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) for Children](#) — This course introduces the concepts and steps involved in providing support to children following a distressing event. It includes activities that focus on the core elements of PFA and how to apply them.
- [Switchboard Technical Assistance Hub](#) — A variety of trainings on refugee children, youth, and family services and education.
- [Refugee Educator Academy](#) — Courses, community of practice, and other learning opportunities through the Carey Institute for Global Good Center for Learning and Practice
- [Immigrant Connections](#) — Fee-based courses
- [Center for Applied Linguistics](#) — Fee-based online courses educators focused on supporting literacy and language acquisition for language learners.
- [Healing Classroom training](#) — IRC can offer in person or online teacher trainings for educators upon request

Selected pedagogical resources for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students

- [How schools can support the language needs of refugees from Afghanistan](#) — A blog post from the Bell Foundation
- [Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm \(MALP\)](#) — The MALP is a culturally responsive instructional approach that supports educators of students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and other culturally and linguistically diverse learners to transition from their preferred and customary ways of learning to Western-style formal education by integrating key elements of formal education while balancing and acknowledging their needs and preferences.
- [Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain](#) — This book draws on neuroscience to explain how culture affects learning and practical strategies for teachers to implement brain-compatible culturally responsive instruction.
- [Colorin Colorado](#) — A resource-packed website for teachers of English Language Learners, including videos, articles, and resource lists.

Bilingual Curricular resources (English/Dari and English/Pashto)

- [Education Above All Resource Pack](#) — A basic, facilitated activity pack with bilingual Dari/English and Pashto/English materials for children and youth in transition
- [Hoopoe Books](#) — Bilingual books, English-Dari & English-Pashto

English resources for supporting social emotional learning and well-being among children and youth affected by forced migration

These tools are not specifically adapted for Afghan students, rather they focus on supporting children and youth affected by conflict and forced migration.

- [Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit](#) (appropriate for ages 6-11)
- To learn more about SEAD approaches and to become trained on how to use the Healing Classrooms model in your school contact the IRC UK technical assistance at eurita@rescue.org.

Supplemental curricular materials in Dari & Pashto

Safe Healing and Learning Spaces (SHLS) Toolkit:

- [Dari & Pashto](#) SHLS games bank
- [Dari Parenting Curriculum](#) for caregivers of 6-11 year-olds
- [Pashto Parenting Curriculum](#) for caregivers of 6-11 year-olds

Curricular materials for teaching about forced migration & Afghanistan

- [Teaching About Refugees](#) — Curricular materials from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Teaching materials for four age groups (spanning 6-18).
- [Homeland Afghanistan](#) — From The Asia Society, 75 video episodes on the geopolitical and cultural heritage of the region, featuring leading experts as well as hundreds of archaeological finds, paintings, literary works, music, photographs, and documentary films.
- [Welcoming Newcomers & Resettling Afghan Refugees](#) — From The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility Learning activities for multiple age groups to capitalize on teachable moments.

Trauma-Informed Care & Education Resources from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

- [Refugee Trauma Resources landing page](#)
- [Resources in Response to the Recent Terrorist Attack and Afghanistan Transition](#)
- [Trauma Facts for Educators](#)
- [Children of War](#) — A Video for Educators
- [Assisting Parents/Caregivers in Coping with Collective Traumas](#)



International Rescue Committee

Since 1933, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future. In more than 40 countries and over 20 U.S. cities, our dedicated teams provide clean water, shelter, health care, education and empowerment support to refugees and displaced people. The IRC has been working in Afghanistan since 1988 providing vital support to Afghans who have endured four decades of violent conflict, as well as natural disasters and the spread of COVID-19. The IRC has recently launched programming in the UK, working in partnership with local councils, to provide integration support to refugees including Afghans in South East England.

Visit <https://www.rescue-uk.org/topic/RISE> to learn more about our work in the UK.

