

## **Strengthening displaced Afghan families in Iran**

Since October 2016, The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Iran has been implementing the UNHCR-funded project “*Strengthening Families in Displacement Contexts*” in the province of Kerman. The project addresses **combined education and protection needs of Afghan refugee families with out-of-school children.**

### **Addressing the needs**

Participating in the project are **256 Afghan refugee families** with at least one out of school child residing in Dasht –e- Zahmat Keshan, Kazem Abad, Zangi Abad, Kerman city and Sharaf Abad in Kerman Province. These five areas have been identified by NRC, Kerman BAFIA (Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs) and Kerman Directorate of Education to be among the most densely populated areas by Afghan residents not living in refugee camps, and particularly out-of-school children and youth.

The UNHCR-supported project addresses the needs of refugee households using a three-pronged approach:

- Giving training on **life skills and positive parenting skills** with a focus on child protection
- Providing **literacy and numeracy courses**
- Providing **conditional cash transfers** to increase self-sufficiency and resilience to shocks.



### **Education and parenting**

NRC, in partnership with the State Welfare Organization (SWO) and the department of Literacy Movement Organizations (LMO) of the Directorate of Education (DoE) is the primary implementing body. LMO offers literacy and numeracy courses for out-of-school children and youth and at least one of their illiterate parents. SWO holds life skills and positive parenting courses to more than 128 parents who have enrolled in the literacy and numeracy classes, raising families’ awareness of child protection related matters, strengthening basic life skills and encouraging positive parenting. SWO also offers life skills training for the siblings of the children who participate in literacy and numeracy courses.



### **“Now I can read”**

One of the participants, Gol Bibi, is a 10-year-old girl who had missed out on formal education due to lack of proper documentation.

“Many of our neighbours who are at the same age as me could read books and write stories, it made me sad before, but now I can read,” she said to NRC.

To improve targeted families’ self-sufficiency and resilience to shocks, NRC is providing conditional cash transfer scheme. By enhancing families’ livelihoods, the project has a positive impact on child protection, because it reduces the scope of child labour and increases the number of children attending school.

### **“We argue less”**

“I feel that I can understand my husband better now. I give him time, space and now we argue less,” Zarafshan told NRC. The 30-year-old woman attends the life skills and positive parenting skills course in NRC’s cultural center in Dasht-e-Zahmat Keshan.

Through a various range of training and assistance, the project addresses education and protection needs of Afghan families.

Many adult participants in the literacy courses point to the hardships of not being able to read and write, claiming that this disadvantage has discouraged them from actively participating in their wider communities. Through consultation with the families themselves, literacy classes have been set up during hours that enable working adult men to participate and attain the much-needed literacy trainings.

### **“It made me feel really good”**

“I went to the bank yesterday to fill out a form, I usually go to this bank and the employees know me. One of the men who worked there looked at me and asked if I needed help to fill out the form, and I answered confidently that I can write myself; and it made me feel really good, said Hekmat, one of the participants in the literacy and numeracy class.



Similarly, people who had previously participated in NRC’s tailoring classes are now taking advantage of the numeracy courses. In this way, they can integrate their talent with the needed math skills to develop different means of sustainable income. NRC will offer them further vocational trainings during which their new numeracy skills would be of benefit.

NRC Iran believes in the benefits of an integrated multi-sectoral response. Through interventions which happen in tandem across multiple themes (education, vocational training/livelihoods, cash, protection) the benefits of each action can be reinforced and multiplied. The project will run through February 2017.