



**Youth on the Move:
former unaccompanied minors
removed to Afghanistan
Emily Bowerman and Abdul Ghafoor**



Refugee Support Network

We work with young people affected by displacement and crisis, enabling them to access, remain and progress in education at multiple stages of the migration journey.



Youth on the Move

Young Afghans who have spent their formative years in the UK care system. Now 18-23 and Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE)

- Explore routes for remaining in UK
- Practical and psychosocial support
- Monitoring outcomes on return



Youth on the Move: Background

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) – refusal of extension of leave to remain after turning 18.

- Reduced support and access to legal representation
- Possibility of detention and forced removal
- Isolation and lack of support



Broken Futures (1)

Broken Futures: Young Afghan asylum seekers in the UK and their country of origin

- From looked-after child to failed adult asylum seeker
- Youth pushed into negative decision-making nexus
- ‘Safe’ return? Complex intersecting factors
- Targeted support essential



Broken Futures (2)

Issues on return include:

- Returned youth as empty-handed outsiders
- Psychosocial impact of UK/Afghanistan contrast – poverty and insecurity
- Westernisation – perceived and actual
- Limited education and employment options – mismatched skills
- Leaving again – at risk of exploitation
- Problems with anti-government groups

Youth on the Move: Goal

That no former unaccompanied minor be left alone and unsupported in the face of potential forced removal to Afghanistan, and that research tracking outcomes for these young people will bring about a better informed and more compassionate approach to decision-making about returns in the UK.



Youth on the Move: Objectives

ARE young people enabled to access legal, psycho-social and practical support in the face of potential forced removal to Afghanistan.

Accurate information about outcomes of forcibly removed young people impacts policy, debate and programmes.



Support Work in the UK

- Information about current situation and options
- Awareness of, and access to, support
- Contingency planning for worse case scenario of enforced removal



Monitoring in Kabul

- Challenges of monitoring from the UK
- Second field visit and interviews with returnees
- Recruitment of Abdul Ghafoor
- Monitoring process to date



Practitioner and policy events

Capacity-building through learning from RSN's findings and facilitating information-sharing sessions.

Determining policy outputs to accompany academic report



Monitoring in Kabul (1)

Bryony Norman, YotM Programme Officer,
introduces our work in Kabul



Monitoring in Kabul (2)

Abdul's presentation about situations of young people on return.



Monitoring in Kabul (3)

Case study 1



Monitoring in Kabul (4)

Case study 2

Other emerging trends:

- Moving away from Kabul & barriers to employment
- Disconnection with family
- Stigma & challenge of being alone
- Familiarity with British system & culture

Plans for research dissemination

- Data gathering and analysis
- Steering group in Kabul
- Academic report and policy briefs



Emily Bowerman, Senior Programmes Officer (UK)

ebowerman@refugeesupportnetwork.org

Abdul Ghafoor, Monitoring Officer (Afghanistan)

aghafoor@refugeesupportnetwork.org

