



# The Lived Experience of Displacement and Mutual Support: Afghans in Pakistan

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# Presentation outline

## **The Lived Experience of Displacement and Mutual Support: Afghans in Pakistan**

1. Research project background and methods
2. The mutual support context in our field-sites
3. 'New arrivals' since 2021
  - Case study: New arrivals in Haripur Refugee Village
4. The necessity and limitations of mutual support

# Protracted **DISPLACEMENT** Economies

[www.displacementeconomies.org](http://www.displacementeconomies.org)

Lebanon

Pakistan

Ethiopia

Dem. Rep. of Congo

Myanmar



**Survey:** 3,187 Households (26,602 individuals)  
**Qualitative Interviews:** 180

(Roughly 50:50 Afghan and Pakistani)  
(Gender breakdown: 40% women)



# Our Approach to Displacement Economies

A whole-of-society approach

‘The displacement affected community’



An inclusive approach to economies

Including non-financial transactions



# The context of mutual support



Mutual aid and peer-to-peer support often overlooked.

The economies of states, markets and civil society only represent part of economic survival.

Survival requires a combination of one's own resources with those from social networks and relations.

Doing the household survey, in Peshawar, Pakistan, 2022.

# Data on mutual support

From the household survey (n = 3,187)

<b>Support RECEIVED from neighbours</b>	
Financial	707 (22%)
Non-financial	1,284 (40%)
<b>Support GIVEN to neighbours</b>	
Financial	645 (20%)
Non-financial	1,227 (38%)

Do you think your neighbours are ever in a situation in which not everyone in the household has enough to eat?

- **Yes:** 37%

Are you able to help them?

- **No:** 12%
- **By sharing food:** 57%
- **By giving money:** 24%
- **By loaning money:** 7%





# Mutual Support (cont.)

*“These people are very poor people themselves. How would they support us? We are still thankful because they allowed us to collect wood from the mountains they own. They had nothing to offer us. At the very beginning they would offer us food when we came to the camps. But they have no money and limited resources so they could not offer much. We have taken their timber and grazed the grass and they have never objected to that. We still do that.”*

*The people of Chitral have shown sympathy to us. However, they couldn't offer money, they had no money themselves. The locals are still helpful in other ways. They would go with us to police stations for bail [good character reference], if needed. Who else will do that for us? The locals are very kind.”*

(Middle-aged Afghan man, Drosh, Pakistan)





# *Gham-khaadi* (occasions of joy and sorrow)

An important source of mutual support

- Practical, and emotional

An indicator of integration and a defining feature of a  
'good neighbour'



# ‘New’ arrivals since 2021



Discussing recent changes with residents of the displacement-affected community in Peshawar, Pakistan, April 2023.

**GoP estimate** of new arrivals in 12 months following Taliban takeover: 250,000.

**CAR estimate** 300,000-500,000 new arrivals.

Very difficult to unpick the data from UNHCR and IOM.

- e.g. IOM flow-monitoring: 339,000 crossed at Torkham and Chaman in March 2023 alone.

Respondents in Peshawar told us people who had arrived since 2021 had previously lived there, in Peshawar.





# New arrivals in Haripur

Haripur = largest Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan.

Established in 1981/82.

Residents estimate about 1,000 families have arrived since summer 2021.

They have a different profile from most existing residents.

A residential area of Haripur.





# New arrivals in Haripur (cont.)

## Profile

- Former returnees
- Higher-educated
- Those who worked with NGOs and international community in Afghanistan

## Issues

- Accommodation
- Activity/employment
- Paperwork
- Access to education and healthcare



# The necessity, and limitations, of mutual support

Our data demonstrates the significance and breadth of mutual support within displacement-affected communities.

Afghan refugees are economically and socially-embedded in Pakistan.

Whilst international support wanes, socially-embedded relations of reciprocity and mutual support remain.

However, important not to romanticise these moral economies.



Afghan-run businesses in Islamabad



# Protracted DISPLACEMENT Economies



# Thank you!



@scmrjems



<http://displacementeconomies.org>

