Supporting Afghan children in schools

3 November 2021

Refugee Education UK

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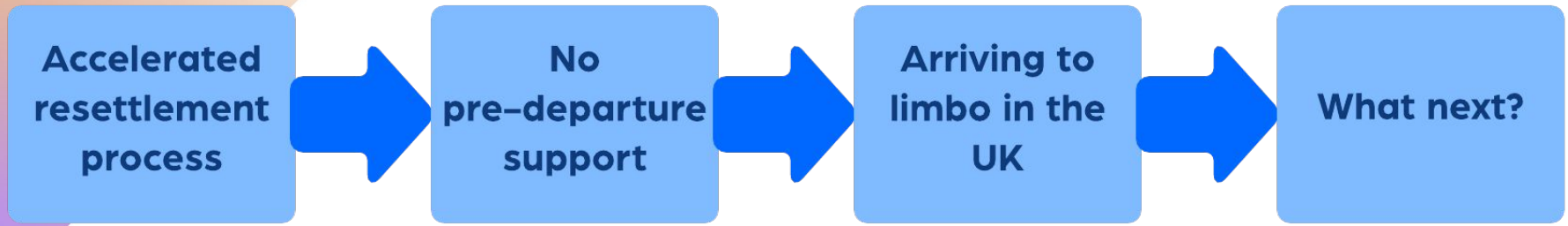
What we will cover

- Experiences of education in Afghanistan
- Key challenges for children
- Support strategies for teachers
- Further support available

Outcome one

recognise the impact of pupils' prior experience of forced displacement and education

Resettlement from Afghanistan



Education in Afghanistan: an overview

Primary school attendance rate	64%
Primary school completion rate	54%
Lower secondary attendance rate	38%
Upper secondary attendance rate	28%

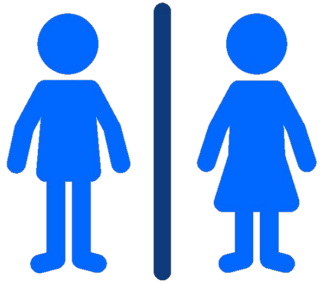
Source: https://data.unicef.org/country/afg/

Education in Afghanistan: key features to keep in mind

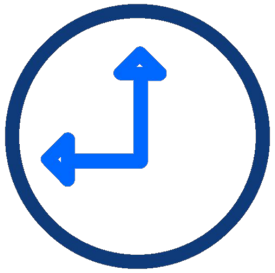
Hear from young Afghans

Listen and read what two young people told us about the Afghanistan education system on our website (https://www.reuk.org/welcome)

- Single sex classrooms



- Shorter school day

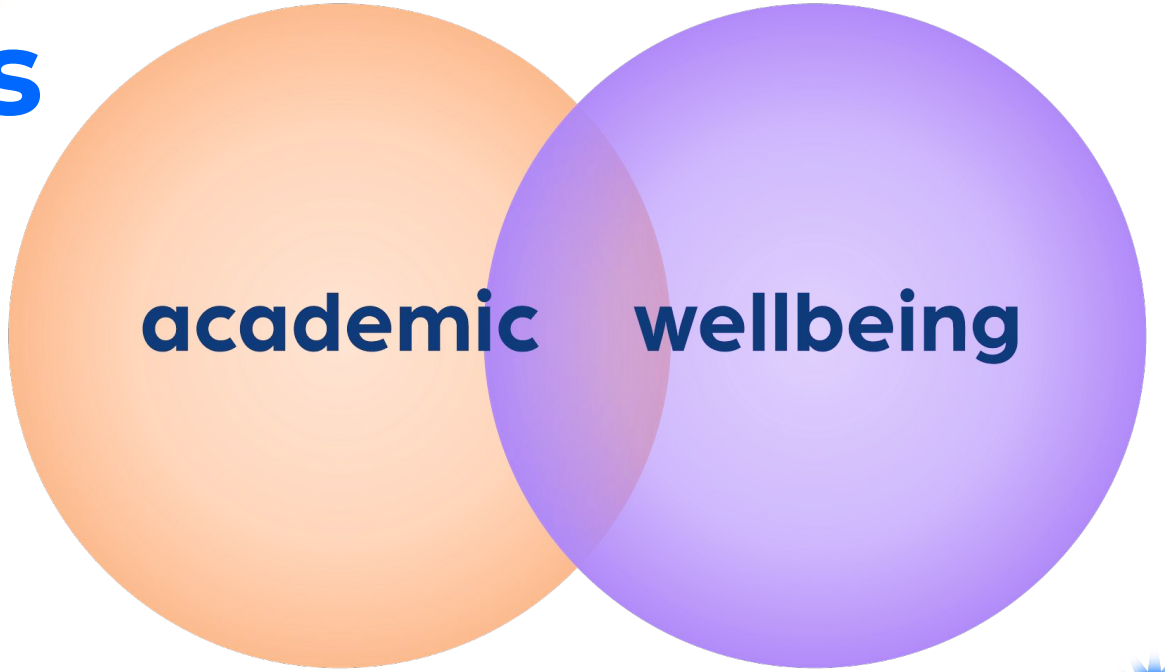


- Teacher-centred pedagogy

Outcome two

develop an understanding of academic and wellbeing challenges for resettled Afghan children

Academic and wellbeing challenges



Wellbeing challenges

what has happened

what you see

Wellbeing challenges

What may have happened
Traumatic experiences in country of origin
Traumatic experiences on arrival
Grief and anxiety
Isolation and loneliness

What you may see in the classroom
Fight or flight mechanism
Distance, withdrawal and disconnection
Reduced concentration and focus
Tiredness and falling asleep
Visible distress

Academic challenges: in the classroom

- Language barriers and insufficient EAL support
- New curriculum and learning style
- Difficulties diagnosing and addressing SEND

Academic challenges: outside the classroom

- Home environments
- Lack of parental support or engagement
- Possible poverty

Outcome 3

develop compassionate and effective interventions appropriate to Afghan children's contexts

Key principles for interaction

- Build trust and have patience
- Look beyond the behaviour
- Recognise language level is not ability level
- Grow children's compassion and world view
- Recognise resilience and adopt an assets-based approach

Reflection – how could you adopt these principles?

Teacher approaches

Responding to fight or flight

- Maintain calm - calm and gentle voice, slow movements
- Create a safe space
- Simple tasks or actions

Awareness of sensitive topics

- Journeys to the UK, family, situation in Afghanistan

Time to talk

- A quiet place
- Internal or external referrals

Informed by:
https://www.tes.com/news/how-support-afghan-evacuee-children

Practical interventions – supporting children

Peer support

Period of adjustment

Extra academic support

Pastoral care

Language support

Welcome and inclusion

Practical interventions – supporting parents

Language support

Helping families adjust

Signposting to further support

Technology support

Remember self-care

Further information or training

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Slide 8:

- Single sex classrooms icon is an adaptation of *Gender* by Adrien Coquet from Noun Project
- Shorter school day icon is an adaptation of *Clock* by mahdaleneyy from Noun Project
- Teacher-centred pedagogy is an adaptation of *Teacher* by glyph.faisalovers from Noun project

Slide 13:

- iStockphoto.com: classroom, DGLimages.