

June 2024

Pathways

Honoring
Refugees
around
the World

PATHFINDER 

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This World Refugee Day, we call attention to the sharp rise in the number of people forcibly displaced from their homes over the past decade. In countries where Pathfinder works, protracted conflicts and climate crises are driving the largest displacements. As an organization committed to ensuring everyone, even in the most challenging environments, has what they need to be healthy, thrive, and live the life we choose, we work with our partners to ensure refugees are connected to essential health and social services that improve their security as they rebuild their lives.

Pathfinder's team in Pakistan provides support to Afghan refugees, while our team in Egypt has supported Syrian and Sudanese refugees. You will read about these refugee programs in this newsletter. In both countries, we work with humanitarian organizations on emergency services while connecting refugee families to host country systems for long-term support.

Our programs focus on refugees most vulnerable to neglect: women and children. Reproductive health care needs, pregnancies, and births do not stop when women and girls are displaced by crises. Like everyone else—women and girls need clean water, nutritional food, and shelter, but they also need family planning and postabortion care services, menstrual hygiene supplies, antenatal and postnatal care, and skilled providers to deliver their babies.

Many women and girls who live in refugee settings are exposed to gender-based violence. Without proper documentation, they can easily be exploited, and it is difficult to connect them with legal services. Many never report cases of assault and exploitation for fear of detention or deportation.

Child protection is also a priority. While some children accompany their mothers, other children may become separated from their families or are cared for by adults who have experienced a series of traumas. They often have been through a series of traumatic events themselves, making psychological support services crucial.

Pathfinder works with local, government, and humanitarian partners to design programs that respond to the unique needs of women and children. Instead of focusing solely on emergency response, we advocate for and help to strengthen health and social systems so that they can respond to the needs of host communities and refugees simultaneously.

The resilience of health systems is essential to refugees. We train health care workers to meet the needs of refugee communities, and we work across sectors to design multisectoral refugee programs. These programs might include connections to health care, gender-based violence services, psychosocial support, and economic empowerment opportunities. Across every program for refugees, we consider the unique needs of women and children—for example, making sure mothers can meet the nutritional needs of their children while providing them with separate washrooms, particularly for their menstrual hygiene needs.

As we continue this important work, we call on governments and their partners to go beyond emergency response by improving the resilience of health and social systems to meet both the needs of refugees and host communities simultaneously. This is the only durable solution to the rise in forced displacements—a phenomenon unlikely to slow down any time soon.

Our programs focus on refugees most vulnerable to neglect: women and children. Reproductive health care needs, pregnancies, and births do not stop when women and girls are displaced by crises.



Sincerely,


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tabinda Sarosh".

Tabinda Sarosh
Interim CEO
Pathfinder



According to The UN Refugee Agency

As of mid-2023, there were approximately 110 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including more than 36 million refugees. Over half of all refugees came from just three countries — the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.



In Burundi, Pathfinder supports women and children living in fragile settings, including those displaced by conflict.

Building a Supportive Community for Displaced Women and Girls

My daughter is a survivor [of violence], and she is now recovering and empowered, and starting a new chapter—thanks to this visit that changed her life.

—RAHMA

Three years ago, Rahma, a 42-year-old single mother, fled her home in Sudan with her three children. Although she and her family have since settled in Cairo, Egypt, starting over in a new country—and finding community—has been challenging.

Women and girls facing displacement, humanitarian crises, and emergency situations are at increased risk of enduring gender-based violence. A few months ago, Rahma's eldest daughter, Sabaa, 18, was stalked by a man in their neighborhood. When she rejected him, he arranged a violent attack on Sabaa, leaving her severely beaten and in need of hospitalization. The attacker also stole Sabaa's mobile phone and subjected her family to blackmail.

With help from a relative, Rahma moved her family into another apartment in Cairo. However, the physical and emotional trauma from the attack devastated Rahma's and Sabaa's trust in the community, and they didn't know where to turn for support.

Help came in the form of 33-year-old Shiraz, a fellow Sudanese refugee and single mother working as a volunteer with the UNICEF-funded Strengthening Refugee Women's and Girls' Safety project, and an Egyptian *Raedat Refiat* (RR), or member of the Ministry of Health and Population's community health worker cadre. Shiraz and the RR visited Rahma's home, where they connected her with the nearby *Kafr Tohormos* health unit for free treatment and provided her with a list of organizations she could reach out to for more help.

Following the home visit, Rahma took Sabaa to *Kafr Tohormos* health unit, where they both received the medical care they needed. Then, she registered for protection with the UN Refugee Agency—a crucial step for ensuring her safety and wellbeing. Next, she contacted Hawaa, a women's organization, where she and Sabaa received psychological support.

Hawaa also guided Rahma to apply for a grant from Forsa, an economic inclusion program. This grant provided funds for Rahma to start a small business project, which allowed her to achieve financial independence and improve her family's living conditions. Sabaa also took a training course in nursing, which opened new avenues for her to contribute to her community and improve her own financial stability.



Israa, a volunteer with the Strengthening Refugee Women's and Girls' Safety project, attends a training implemented by Pathfinder.

Egypt hosts over **480,000** refugees and asylum seekers from 62 nationalities—a 64% increase from 2022.¹

To support Egypt's Ministry of Health and Population with meeting the increased need for health care services among migrants and host communities, Pathfinder Egypt implemented the UNICEF-funded Strengthening Refugee Women and Girls' Safety pilot project in the Giza governorate. In collaboration with local partner Tadwein, Pathfinder strengthened the capacities of outreach workers, health providers, and community members to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.



Volunteers from Cairo's refugee community attend a Pathfinder training.

Rahma's home visit helped her access medical and psychological care, improve her financial livelihood, and reignite her family's trust in their community. Rahma remembers that day with gratitude: "My daughter is a survivor [of violence], and she is now recovering and empowered, and starting a new chapter, thanks to this visit that changed her life."

¹ The UN Refugee Agency, *Fact Sheet—Egypt*, January 2024, https://www.unhcr.org/eg/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2024/01/UNHCR-Egypt-Factsheet_JAN-2024.pdf



Two of Taj Bibi's seven siblings—Aysha, 10 (left) and Dawood, 13 (right)—share water in their home in a refugee camp in Pakistan.



Taj Bibi, 30, provides for her elderly parents and younger siblings by selling mantu dumplings. In 2023, Pathfinder supported her with livelihood training to start a sewing business and supplement her income.

Finding Direction and Stability on Shifting Grounds

I appreciate the support provided by Pathfinder [in] my journey of growth, resilience, and eventual restoration of hope in the face of adversity.

—MAISAM

Maisam Anwari, a 16-year-old unaccompanied minor, has been living in Rawalpindi, Pakistan since August of 2021. When the Taliban began recruitment efforts in his neighborhood in Afghanistan, he and his family fled their home. In the chaos of crossing the border, Maisam was separated from the rest of his family.

Alone and disoriented, Maisam managed to find temporary shelter with an Afghan family in Quetta, but was abandoned upon reaching Islamabad. Later, Maisam crossed paths with a compassionate Pakistani citizen who facilitated contact with the UN Refugee Agency, which secured Maisam temporary refuge in a safe home for children under 15 years of age. However, Maisam would be turning 15 the following year, and would have to find other living arrangements soon.

In 2022, the UN Refugee Agency connected Maisam with the Pathfinder team in Pakistan, who began searching diligently for foster care options that aligned with his cultural background and personal needs.

The Pathfinder team arranged for Maisam to meet with an Afghan Community Outreach Volunteer, whom he felt was a good match. Upon Maisam's decision to stay with her,



Maisam at home in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.



Maisam serves a customer in his foster guardian's restaurant.

Pakistan has the fifth largest refugee population in the world, and is currently home to **1.38 M** registered Afghan refugees and asylum seekers.²

In partnership with The UN Refugee Agency, Pathfinder Pakistan implements the *Gender-Based Violence & Child Protection Systems Strengthening & Individual Support to Refugees & Asylum Seekers* project in urban and rural settlements in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Attock, Chakwal, Mianwali in Punjab, and Karachi in Sindh. The project protects child refugees by improving case management systems and procedures for identifying risk, finding appropriate alternative care arrangements, and establishing mechanisms for preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation.

Pathfinder trained his new foster guardian in child protection and safeguarding. They still live together in her home in Rawalpindi today.

Under his foster guardian's care, Maisam found the physical and emotional stability he needed. Pathfinder also provided two installments of emergency cash assistance to ensure Maisam's financial security and tailored training sessions to cultivate his interests and talents. Through his training, Maisam was able to complete an English language course and participate in music classes with his peers.

In recognition of the heavy psychological burden of coming of age amid conflict, displacement, and separation, Pathfinder arranged counseling sessions for Maisam, with a focus on anger management and life skills development.

Pathfinder is also trying to reconnect Maisam with his family through the International Committee of the Red Cross, with hope for eventual reunification.

Under his caregiver's guidance, Maisam has flourished in his new environment. Currently, he is making new friends and honing social skills, helping customers in his guardian's restaurant, and adjusting well to life in his host community—with confidence in himself and support from the people around him.

Maisam is grateful for the care he receives from his foster guardian, who he has come to see as family—and to Pathfinder for bringing them together: "I appreciate the support provided by Pathfinder [in] my journey of growth, resilience, and eventual restoration of hope in the face of adversity."

² The UN Refugee Agency, *Fact Sheet—Pakistan*, March 2024, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/pakistan-factsheet-8165>



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ON THE COVER: Maisam, a 16-year-old Afghan refugee, adjusts to life in Rawalpindi, Pakistan with Pathfinder support. This includes English classes and music lessons.
PHOTO: Arif Shad

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in the most challenging environments,
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Rohingya Camp, Bangladesh. Photo: Jelina Olson

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