

**Stranded Amidst Resettlement Applications:  
A Case Study  
of  
Pakistani Refugees in China**

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## ABSTRACT

Among one of the two regions in the world where “urban (refugee) caseloads are currently of major concern” (UNHCR's Policy and Practice Regarding Urban Refugees 1995), the People’s Republic of China is an ever more influential actor in the Asian region and beyond, and has become an important interlocutor for the United Nations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the area, notably on refugee-related issues. This thesis, based on the findings of direct observation and in-dept interviews with Pakistani refugees awaiting resettlement and the UNHCR will examine the process of integration at the initial phase by observing urban Pakistani refugees in Langfang and at a more advanced stage by observing refugees from Pakistan in Yanjiao which altogether form the largest urban refugee group residing on the outskirts of Beijing, one of the most booming and fast developing cities in the world.

Despite the long debate between China and the UNHCR to agree on adopting refugee or asylum laws in China’s national legislation, this research will generate valuable insight into the Pakistani refugees’ integrative capacity and structural barriers to integration, mainly the socio-economic, educational and healthcare dimensions of the under-explored lives of urban refugees who, regardless of the actual political and legal conditions vis-à-vis refugees and, despite the fact that they solely remain under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, have become linguistically capable, after several years in Guangzhou and Beijing, of becoming independent, in terms of building social networks

within the Chinese society, NGO fieldworkers and the refugee communities while, at the same time, living on the outskirts of one of the most thriving urban spaces in the world.

**Key words:** Integration, resettlement, socio-economic, cultural, educational

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	Positive relations with society	
Preservation of cultural identity	No	Yes
No	Marginalization	Assimilation
Yes	Separation	Integration

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**The selected nine areas of integration from Ager and Strang’s 2008 “Indicators of Integration Framework”**

Markers  And  Means	Employment	Leads to: Economic independence Successful positive integration
	Housing	Establishes: Security and stability Social connections Access to healthcare, education and employment.
	Education	Builds foundations for: Language skills Social networks Satisfaction with the host’s treatment of young refugee population.
	Healthcare	Secures: Service provision to refugees with specific needs Satisfaction with health care that impacts integration.
Social  Connections	Social bridges	Reflected by: Active mixing with people from different ethnic backgrounds Frequency of attendance of local events ethnic or religious groupings
	Social links	Reflected by: Contact with the UNHCR, local NGOs and the Government
	Social bonds	Reflected by: Main participation in local cultural and community festivals The bonds developed with the host community.
	Knowledge of Mandarin	Involves: Fluency in local language Strong foundations for social networks.

Facilitators		Successful integration
	Knowledge of local culture	Involves: Familiarity with host's culture, customs and mores Successful integration
	Safety and stability	Involves: Securitized, protected and safe environment Successful integration

**TABLE 3**  
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**CHINA**

**REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN CHINA -- MAIN ORIGIN**

1. Refugee population, end of year--main origin (main nationalities in 2005)

Origin	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Viet Nam	288,805	290,621	292,267	293,227	294,057	295,276	297,219	299,287	299,287	300,897
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	43	91

**TABLE 4: Contributions in US dollars to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 2000-2010 (Excerpt from www.unhcr.org)**

Year	USD
2010	250,000
2009	250,000
2008	651,906
2007	250,000
2006	250,000
2005	250,000
2004	250,000
2003	250,000
2002	283,600
2001	312,700
2000	250,000

**TABLE 5**  
**Age range of respondents**

	Yanjiao	Langfang
Adults (above 18)	11	4
Children below 10	2	4
Between 10-18	4	

**TABLE 6**  
**Distribution of employed Pakistani refugees prior to flight**

	Previously Employed	Previously Unemployed	Total
Men- Yanjiao	5	—	5
-Langfang	2	—	2
Women-Yanjiao	1	2	3
-Langfang	1	1	2
Total	9	3	12

**TABLE 7**  
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Yanjiao Refugees		Langfang Refugees	
Volunteer	3	Volunteer	—
In-volunteer	2	In-volunteer	4
<b>Total</b>	5		4

**TABLE 8**  
**Age range of children and youth respondents**

Age group	Yanjiao Refugees	Langfang Refugees	Total
Below 10	2	4	6
Between 11-18	4	—	4
Between 19-25	3	—	3
Total	9	4	13

**TABLE 9**  
**Health care use and problems encountered**

	Yanjiao refugees	Langfang refugees
Patients of Chronic diseases	4	—
Access to health care 6 months prior to interviews	5	1
Problems encountered:		
Language	2	4
Upfront payments	11	4
Waiting lists/Line ups	4	—
Other	—	—
Costs of medical expenses	6	1

“The entire system of refugee protection and support rests on a foundation of voluntary action and willing sacrifice.”

**W.R. Smyser**

“The difference between a house and a home is the difference between a place to stay and a place to live. A home is a place of safety, security and stability, the lack of which was the main reason refugees left their country of origin”

Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE

“Eight years is just two words but imagine waiting eight years”

Young Pakistani refugee

“We came to China, exactly two years now, we came in April 2009. We moved from hotel to Yanjiao, then hotel again, then Guangzhou, then finally we came to Langfang one and a half months ago... We moved to Langfang for the education of our children.”

Refugee in Langfang

“He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

Deuteronomy 10:18-19



Map 1: Map of China (ChinaToday.com)



Map 2: Main map of Pakistan and Chinese (www.googlemaps.com)

## Introduction

There are about fifty urban refugees in Yanjiao, among whom are thirty-four Pakistan urban refugees of Ahmadi faith (14 men, 8 women and 12 children) and approximately 20 Pakistani refugees of the same religious group in Langfang who are under the mandate of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees which has established community centers for urban refugees from the Middle East, North Africa and Asia fleeing persecution, social conflict, ethnic divisions and different forms of confrontation in Hebei province, China.<sup>1</sup>

Yanjiao, also known as Yanjiao Economic and Technological Development Zone, has been hosting around fifty Pakistani refugees since 2008. Twenty-five kilometers away from Beijing and with a population of sixty to eighty thousand inhabitants, Yanjiao is one of the most populated sub-districts of Beijing. The UNHCR constantly emphasizes the cordial relations with the authorities in Yanjiao, often qualified as “cooperative and friendly.”<sup>2</sup> The refugees refer to their residence in Yanjiao as ‘our colony’, showing the strong attachment of the Ahmadi refugees to Fucheng Siqu, Yanjiao and, have over the past two and a half years, consolidated very strong ‘family ties’ with the host community. The second dwelling place for Pakistani refugees in Hebei is Langfang, fifty kilometers from Beijing, with thirty-two ethnic minorities of which the Hui ethnic minority accounts for sixty-six thousand and the Manchu minority for twenty-two thousand. The city has its own ethnic autonomous

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<sup>1</sup> Hebei consists of 11 districts, subdivided into 172 county-level divisions, among which is Langfang with a population of 4.08 million and Yanjiao, part of Beijing’s Tong Zhou district, with a population of sixty to eighty thousand inhabitants, are hosting Pakistani refugees of the Ahmadiyya community who constitute of the largest share of urban refugees in North Eastern China (The People’s Government of Hebei Province Website)

<sup>2</sup> Informal interview with the Senior Protection Officer at the UNHCR

counties, mainly the Dachang Hui Autonomous County for the Hui minorities and the Manchu Hui town, along with eighty-four other ethnic villages. The Pakistani refugees, who moved to Langfang in February 2011, qualify their new neighborhood as “friendly”, with strong emphasis on how their “Our Muslim friends are very good, pay (them) regular visits, twice a week, teach the kids (and towards whom they) have no doubt about the sincerity and kindness.” In both Yanjiao and Langfang, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and recently established local grassroot NGOs have taken an operational role in the protection of the rights and needs of the Pakistani refugees.

Since 1982, The People’s Republic of China (China) has become party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Refugee Protocol pertaining to refugee protection. Article 32(2) of the 1982 Constitution of the People’s Republic of China 1982 states that China can provide ‘asylum to foreigners who request it for political reasons’ while Article 15 of the 1985 Law of the People’s Republic of China on the regulations for Foreigners Entering and Leaving the Country reinforce that those who appeal for protection on political grounds will have permission of residence in China following the ‘approval by the competent authorities of the Chinese Government (Chan and Schloenhardt 2007: 215-245.)

Yet, China has failed to develop its own national refugee legislation, solely relying on a variety of unwritten ad hoc policies and existing immigration law to address refugee issues, it has been heavily financing the UNHCR’s activities channeled towards direct protection and assistance to individual asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover the UN Agency has been advocating the building of national capacities on asylum-related areas that would

establish refugee rights and ensure China's compliance with the obligations under the 1951 Convention and 1969 Protocol( UNHCR Country Operations Plan 2006:1). As the national refugee regulations were on the legislative agenda of the State Council in 2006, the UNHCR has re-stated the above objectives, mainly, that asylum regulations be preserved under international protection standards.

While several areas of refugee protection are yet to be optimal, China ensures that the principle of 'non-refoulement' is guaranteed, which implies that the Chinese authorities will not extradite or 'refoule' a refugee who has a well-founded fear of persecution. In terms of integration, fieldwork results have shown that China has been hospitable to the Pakistani refugee communities living in Hebei province, providing a safe and secure environment for the refugee families who were once persecuted and had to flee from Pakistan. A glance at successful integration of refugees in China is highlighted by the prominent case of the large Indo-Chinese refugee population in Guangxi (Southern province in China), of which 98 percent who fled to China between 1979 and 1982, who, although, still awaiting Chinese citizenship (naturalization) as of May 2007, are fully entitled to most of the privileges made available to Chinese nationals (UNHCR News Stories 2007).

In this thesis, I will explore the integration challenges and experience of Pakistani urban refugee 'colonies'<sup>3</sup> at an initial phase of integration in Langfang and a more advanced stage of integration in Yanjiao. The refugees in Langfang have been temporarily settled in the Northern Province about one and a half months prior to fieldwork while those in Yanjiao

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<sup>3</sup> Used by Kashif, one of the refugees living in Yanjiao. Most of the refugees in Yanjiao live in Fucheng Siqu and they would regularly refer Fucheng Siqu as the "colony" due to the concentrated number of Pakistani refugees but also to the sense of community to their brothers and sisters who also had to flee Pakistani torturers.

have been accommodated in Hebei for over two and a half years.<sup>4</sup> Based on Ager and Strang's 2008 integration indicators, I will discuss the conditions under which local integration is facilitated or hindered, including government policies and assistance from international and local NGOs, relations between the refugees and the host community and the attitudes and behaviors of the refugees themselves. Moreover, it is important to note that these Pakistani refugees are not permitted to stay in China permanently and will be resettled.<sup>5</sup> Basically, the People's Republic of China is not a country of destination but rather a transit country, hosting refugees until acceptance from third countries. According to Stein(1986:273), 'temporary settlement is not very different from local integration' and this can be traced in the practices of many host countries which, provided the long periods of awaiting repatriation, have almost equalized definite settlement with local integration and should eventually lead to equal entitlements to social and economic rights. Although accession to legal protection and rights have been implemented in many parts of the world, temporary residence and protection has been criticized due to the limited rights entitled to refugees (Kritzman 2010:322).

### ***Methodology***

This thesis uses existing annual UNHCR evaluation reports and is supplemented by formal and informal interviews with UNHCR field officers, NGO practitioners, refugee interviews, direct observation and focus group discussions. The reports were examined prior

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<sup>4</sup> Informal interview with the UNHCR's Community Services Assistant

<sup>5</sup> Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third state that has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status (UNHCR, 2004). In the case of Pakistani refugees in China, the latter are awaiting resettlement to third countries in terms of legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions.

to field work that lasted ten days in Langfang and Yanjiao. The Pakistani refugees who consented to participate in the research study were contacted by the UNHCR, Beijing two months preceding empirical study. Overall, I interviewed fifteen adult refugees and observed ten refugees below the age of 18. In all, three families in Yanjiao and two in Langfang after conducting focus group meetings with each family. Snowballing has been used in Yanjiao: the first two refugee families contacted introduced me to acquaintances, a family of five members, who consented to the interview. The data was mainly gathered from qualitative observation, informal conversations and interviews, focus group discussions (Allotey 1998) with final in-depth interviews as “the greater the number of observations, the greater the reliability of the data” (Cohen et al 2000:314). Ager (1994) also recommends the use of refugees’ narrative as a research tool with refugees and supports the use of participatory observation and interviews to optimize the level of understanding of protracted refugee situations. The goal of interviews was, hence, to provide a better understanding of the situation of urban refugees from the perspectives and qualities inherent in the refugee communities.

Fieldwork was thus performed at both the institutional level: the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UNHCR staff and at an individual level, based on refugee narratives and observation of their integration in Langfang and Yanjiao. According to Campbell (2006), focusing on the ‘refugee perspective’ or strictly on the ‘UNHCR perspective’ can often lead to biased findings. Subsequently, following Campbell’s footsteps, I adopted an identical methodological approach which incorporates “diverse voices and perspectives” that will try to clarify the puzzle that I had prior to conducting the empirical

study on the integration of the Urban Pakistani refugees. In addition, secondary sources of data were accumulated through documentation from the UNHCR staff in Beijing and the Chinese Government website. Further information about refugee livelihoods was gathered through the formal and informal interviewing of four UNHCR Beijing international and local staff. My internship period from April to July 2010 at the UNHCR's office in Beijing also served as a significant source of data. All interviews were conducted in English, the researcher and interviewees being conversant in the language and field notes were taken at every encounter with the refugees.

Hence, based on following research questions, I will seek to evaluate the integration of Pakistani refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang:

### ***Research Questions and Hypotheses***

Research Question 1: Are urban Pakistani refugees able to integrate in the Chinese society despite inaccessibility to employment and educational institutions?

*Hypothesis 1: The lack of employment and inaccessibility to educational institutions hinder integration for both Langfang and Yanjiao Pakistani refugees within the host community;*

Research Question 2: Have the urban Pakistani refugees been able to establish strong social connections with the host community and non-refugee populations?

*Hypothesis 2: Urban Pakistani refugees who are at a more advanced stage of integration with the host community, Pakistani refugees in Yanjiao, are able to establish stronger social connections with the host community and non-refugee populations and are, therefore, better able to integrate within the host community than those in Langfang;*

Research Question 3: What are the alternative hindrances to successful integration during temporary settlement?

*Hypothesis 3.1: The lack of familiarity with the new environment reduces integration for refugees at an early stage of integration, Langfang refugees;*

*Hypothesis 3.2: The lack of familiarity with Mandarin reduces integration for both refugee communities within the host country*

The framework of the thesis encompasses Chapter I which will provide the background of the study and place it in the context of the ongoing debate on the integrative capacity of urban refugees during temporary settlement. China's role in the field of refugee protection, the cause of flight of Pakistani refugees from Pakistan to China will be described in Chapter II. Chapter III will present the findings of the research and discuss its significance in the domain of integration. Finally, conclusions and recommendations on the current debate on protracted refugee situations in China will be examined in the final section.

### ***Limitations***

The primary database is limited to interviews with only a sample of twenty-five Pakistani refugees, putting representativeness at stake.<sup>6</sup> The aim of the study is to provide an insight into the integration of refugee communities at different stages of temporary settlement but due to the restricted sampling, the similar religious background of the refugees, the relatively well-educated sample and the difficulty to ascertain the employed refugee population on Chinese black market, the findings of this thesis cannot be generalized to all urban refugees in China, an already under-explored refugee community.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2005, there were 99 Pakistani recognized refugees in China as per the 2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook on China and, in the first quarter of year 2011, there were 102 refugees in China.

## Chapter I Background and definitions

Despite the growing number of refugees in the world's cities, there are surprisingly few studies focusing exclusively on refugees' experiences in the urban environment. As clearly emphasized by Bascom (1995), the integration of urban refugees is one of the most poorly understood and under-researched topics in forced migration. With few publications from the UN Refugee Agency, several authors, amongst them Loren Landau(2004:2), have largely deplored the “surprisingly few studies focusing exclusively on displaced persons’ experiences in and effects on the urban environment” in Asian societies where the legal framework on asylum and protection policies and the ongoing conflicts have traced migration flows to urban spaces.

Typologies of urban refugees by UNHCR’s 1994 *Community Services for Urban Refugees* categorizes urban refugee populations as individuals who have lived in urban areas in their home country, those even from rural areas looking for better job and education prospects, individuals who have formerly been politically involved, high-skilled or highly-educated individuals, one-parent (female) families, individuals with specific needs or who have left their country of first asylum (UNHCR 1994). However, despite the above characteristics attributed to refugees, the most widely accepted definition is the attribution of the term *urban refugee* to the refugee who shifted from camp setting to urban areas while the UNHCR's Policy and Practice Regarding Urban Refugees (1995) underlined that in northern Africa and central Asia “any refugee living in an urban area is considered as an

urban refugee, regardless of his or her origins.” Hence, the qualification of Pakistani refugees as ‘urban’ refugees in China’s setting.

Researchers who conducted empirical research on urban refugees in Africa, mainly the empirical study of refugees in Kampala (Landau 2004), the economic livelihoods of Sudanese refugees with “closed files” in Egypt (Grabska, 2005), the Palestinian refugees in Egypt (El Abed 2003) and urban refugees in Nairobi (Campbell 2006), have provided insight on the under-explored dimensions of urban refugees; their struggle, integration and their contribution to these societies. Empirical studies on urban refugee communities’ integration based in Western developed states with relatively similar jurisdictions and policies for refugee integration are focused on the linkages between asylum policies and refugee integration (Mulvey 2010), legal status (Da Lomba 2010), studies of the personal capacities of the refugees to settle in new environments (Valtonen 2004). Many of these studies underlined the connection between citizenship and refugee integration and how the eligibility to citizenship leads to full immersion in the host community, triggering notions such as belonging (Castles *et al* 2002). Valenta and Bunar (2010) explored the linkages between Ager and Strang’s framework of indicators and refugee integration policies in two Nordic states while Smyth, Geri and Kum(2010) and McKeary and Newbold (2010) viewed refugee integration from the employment and health perspectives. It is crystal clear that most of these researchers have selected case studies either from developed Western and European countries or from Africa, mainly regions which have comparable socio-economic structures and developed or developing refugee integration strategies and asylum structures.

Despite recent attempts to broaden what has been a limited discussion on urban refugees in developing countries, there is still a dearth of literature on urban refugees in Asia; this is reinforced by the adoption of the main theme of the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK), in the 2010 HPG Working Paper: the context of “‘invisible’ (urban refugee) population.” In the absence of comprehensive literature on urban refugees and given the marginal importance ascribed to urban integration in Asia, I intend to focus my research objectives on urban refugees, an overlooked group, in developing countries (Al-Sharmani 2003, Human Rights Watch 2002, Kibreab 1996).

For a better understanding of the integration of urban refugee populations, it is important to define integration itself. Considered as one of the three durable solutions for refugees at the end of the refugee cycle, integration has been attributed diverse definitions and is at the heart of the literature on solutions for refugee populations (Gale 2008). According to Castles et al (2001:12), “there is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration.” Attempts at defining integration have depicted a process that ‘starts from day one of arrival’ (Da Lomba 2010; ECRE 2005:2; Castles *et al.* 2002:126) while UNHCR’s definition encompasses integration as “the process by which the refugee is assimilated into the social and economic life of a new national community” (UNHCR, undated: 5, as quoted by Kuhlman 1991 and Grabska 2005). The Official Journal of the European Union( 2010/C 115/01) offers a similar definition viewing local integration as “a dynamic, two way *process* of mutual interaction, requiring not only efforts by national, regional and local authorities but also a greater commitment by

the host community and immigrants,” stating that “integration policies should be supported (towards) coordination with other relevant policy areas, such as employment, education and social inclusion...a strong commitment by the host community and the active participation of immigrants in all aspects of collective life.” Therefore, amongst the literature on integration, it is undeniable that integration is viewed as a *process* where both refugee and host populations “are able to coexist, (interact), sharing the same resource – both economic and social – with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community” (Harrell-Bond, 1986:7).

At the heart of the debate on the urban integration of refugee communities, several scholars have developed similar views on account of their observation. While Al-Sharmani (2004) maintains that refugee livelihoods and integration are interconnected, Vrečer (2010) refers to integration as “learning cultures, when (forced) migrants learn from the mainstream and other cultures”. Doná and Berry’s empirical study of the Guatemalan refugees fleeing to Mexico’s Quintana Roo and integrating into the Mexican society clearly exemplifies that, although the Guatemalans perceived their stay in the host community as temporary, the latter endorsed integration. Based on the successful integration of Guatemalan refugees, the conclusion is that permanent residence in the first country of asylum is not necessary for integration to ensue; studies of different ‘acculturating groups’ in different settings have proved that integration is opted for in such situations of difficult and delayed resettlement or repatriation (Doná and Berry 1999:185-190).

According to Berry’s 1980 model, positive responses to two issues: the preservation of cultural identity and the seeking of ‘positive relations with the larger (dominant) society’

will lead to *integration* while Doná and Berry (1999:172) maintain that if one holds on to his/ her cultural, ethnic or religious ‘heritage identity’ and mingles with the society, integration is mostly likely to be present. On the other hand, negative responses to the first issue and positive ones on the second one will lead to an *assimilation* strategy and when individuals respond positively and negatively to the first and second issues respectively, individuals will be more prone to retain their cultural and ethnic specificities. “No” answers to both issues give rise to *marginalization*, which is the disconnectedness with both the host community and the country of origin.

**TABLE 1**

**DIFFERENT STRATEGIES FOR ACCULTURATION, BERRY (1980)**

	Positive relations with society	
Preservation of cultural identity	No	Yes
No	Marginalization	Assimilation
Yes	Separation	Integration

Along with Berry’s model on integration, I have selected nine indicators of integration based on Ager and Strang’s *Indicators of Integration* (2008) to explore the livelihoods of Pakistani refugees in Langfang and Yanjiao. The nine indicators of integration are grouped into three categories: ‘Means and markers’, ‘Social connections’ and ‘Facilitators’. The first dimension, ‘markers and means’ will indicate successful integration only upon achievement of four areas: employment, housing, education and health care that strongly assist and are conducive to positive integration (Ager and Strang 2004). Besides Ager and Strang, the Council of Europe (1997) has also emphasized these four dimensions as major integration indicators (Ager and Strang 2004:5). Social connections will encompass ‘social bridges’, ‘social bonds’ and ‘social links’ and they will convey the interaction between refugees, the

host community, local authorities and NGOs while facilitators include ‘language and cultural knowledge’ and ‘safety and stability’ ( Ager and Strang 2008:28)

**TABLE 2**  
**THE SELECTED NINE AREAS OF INTEGRATION FROM AGER AND STRANG’S 2008 “INDICATORS OF INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK”**

Markers And Means	Employment	Leads to: Economic independence Successful positive integration
	Housing	Establishes: Security and stability Social connections Access to healthcare, education and employment.
	Education	Builds foundations for: Language skills Social networks Satisfaction with the host’s treatment of young refugee population.
	Healthcare	Secures: Service provision to refugees with specific needs Satisfaction with health care that impacts integration.
Social Connections	Social bridges	Reflected by: Active mixing with people from different ethnic backgrounds Frequency of attendance of local events ethnic or religious groupings
	Social links	Reflected by: Contact with the UNHCR, local NGOs and the Government
	Social bonds	Reflected by: Main participation in local cultural and community festivals The bonds developed with the host community.
Facilitators	Knowledge of Mandarin	Involves: Fluency in local language Strong foundations for social networks. Successful integration
	Knowledge of local culture	Involves: Familiarity with host’s culture, customs and mores Successful integration

	Safety and stability	Involves: Securitized, protected and safe environment Successful integration
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**1.1 The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, Beijing**

To better understand the Pakistani refugee communities’ integration situation in Hebei, it is important to have an insight in the work of the UNHCR in the region. UNHCR’s mandate in Beijing was established in 1979 to a Regional Office in 1997 covering operations in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and activities in Mongolia since 2000 (UNHCR Country Operations Plan 2006). Based on the commitment to upholding the social and economic standing of refugees, particularly by means of education, vocational training, livelihoods promotion and self-reliance initiatives, the UNHCR, which is responsible of Refugee Determination Status(RSD) in China, promotes the integration process, by engaging in the sustaining and providing most of the ‘markers and means’ crucial for refugee integration. The UNHCR’s staff pays monthly visits to refugees dispersed in Yanjiao, Langfang, Yiwu, Wuhan, Bazhou and Guangzhou, six of the dwelling places of refugees in China. In Yanjiao and Langfang, visits to refugee families are made twice a month. The UNHCR, during these visits, assesses the living conditions and needs of the refugees. Moreover, UNHCR’s community services officers can be contacted on a 24-hour basis in case of emergency.

In terms of accommodation issues, the UNHCR staff liaises with local landlords on means of monthly or annual rental payment, housing conditions and provides a monthly budget of 1500 RMB to each refugee family. The education of refugee children aged six to ten is ensured by the UNHCR but, in some cases, local teachers, NGO practitioners

volunteer by home tutoring the refugee children. Further, the UNHCR Beijing is negotiating for the imminent enrolment of refugee children in local schools in Langfang, explaining the main reason for the relocation of three families from Guangzhou to Langfang in February 2011.

### ***1.2 Friends of UNHCR***

Besides the UNHCR, local grass-root Non-Governmental Organization “Friends of UNHCR” consisting of around forty expatriates and locals from different walks of life, faiths and fields has been addressing the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers in China. From coordinated outreach activities and community-based initiatives aimed at incorporating refugees within humanitarian public arenas to weekly meetings with the refugee families, this partner of the UNHCR has largely benefited protracted refugees in implementing positive lifestyle patterns.

## Chapter II

While the ongoing work of the UNHCR and Friends of UNHCR have established foundations for integration, in this chapter, I will offer an overview of China's role as asylum and funds provider in the context of refugee protection.

### **2.1 The People's Republic of China in the field of refugee protection and assistance**

Although refugees have not constituted a significant share of its foreign residents, China has been seen as a place of exile by sizeable refugee populations, especially during the interwar period in Vietnam from 1978 to 1987 when about a million Vietnamese fled to China. By the end of 1992, the Vietnamese refugee population amounted to around 285,500 and increased to 301,041 refugees in 2005 (see Table 3), becoming the second largest host country where Indo-Chinese refugees found asylum (Nations Encyclopedia). Therefore, even prior to becoming signatory to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol, China has, during the Vietnam War, proved to be an important stakeholder in refugee protection in the Asian region, protecting the Indo-Chinese refugees or the so-called 'boat people'.

**TABLE 3**  
**PAKISTANI AND INDO-CHINESE REFUGEE POPULATIONS IN CHINA**  
**(UNHCR's 2005 Statistical yearbook on China)**

**CHINA**

**REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN CHINA -- MAIN ORIGIN**

1. Refugee population, end of year--main origin (main nationalities in 2005)

Origin	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Viet Nam	288,805	290,621	292,267	293,227	294,057	295,276	297,219	299,287	299,287	300,897
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	43	91

The People's Republic of China extended its commitment to international treaties by

ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the U.N. Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) which is in line with the principle of *non-refoulement*<sup>7</sup>. Article 3(1) of CAT also reinforces the fact that “No State Party shall expel, return (“*refouler*”), or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.”<sup>8</sup> Signatory to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol<sup>9</sup>, China has undertaken international obligations with regards to fulfilling certain areas of the ‘markers and means’ (discussed in Chapter I) that would guarantee rights of protection on its territory.

However, there are still limitations to the scope of commitment to universal human rights conventions as Article 2, Paragraph 7 of the U.N. Charter states that “nothing in the Charter authorizes the United Nations to interfere in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.” Further, as implied by Hathaway on the Statute’s and the Convention’s definition, the assistance provided has to be in line with the asylum provider’s ‘own national interest,’ states have the right to exclude refugees who have committed a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity and the international refugee

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<sup>7</sup> No Contracting State shall expel or return (“*refouler*”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

<sup>8</sup> Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

<sup>9</sup> According to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 545 UNTS 189, the CHINA acceded to the Convention and to the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees on September 24, 1982.

protection framework “does not require states to afford asylum or durable protection to such refugees as the state chooses to recognize” (Hathaway 1990:166). With this, the scope of the refugees’ rights can be significantly constrained. However, under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, China has made no reservation except for the last section of Article 14 whereby “in the territory of any other Contracting State, (the refugee) shall be accorded the same protection as is accorded in that territory to nationals of the country in which he has his habitual residence” and Article 16(3) which underlines the access to courts (RefWorld website). Despite an increasing tendency to evade State responsibility, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees has emphasized the application of “minimum standards” of protection that need to be implemented for refugees or similarly situated persons of concern. In China’s context, the lack of clear government position on refugee rights and status, which is mainly the failure to comply with the provision of “the same protection as is accorded in that territory to nationals of the country in which (the refugee) has his habitual residence”, becomes source of controversy as to China’s role as signatory to the Convention and Protocol.

Accordingly, as from 1982, China’s role in asylum protection has mainly been the enhancing and exercising, on humanitarian grounds, of *non-refoulement*, that shelters asylum-seekers who are discriminated against on any of the five grounds of the Geneva Convention.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, all Pakistanis, North African and Middle Eastern amongst other refugees who are currently residing in Beijing, Yanjiao, Guangzhou, Langfang, Bazhou and Yiwu are protected against non-refoulement and are even guaranteed

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<sup>10</sup>The five grounds of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is the existence of a well-founded fear of persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.

certain privileges not applied to the Indo-Chinese refugees. Pakistani refugees are entitled the same services as Chinese nationals in terms of safety and security, health care services and benefit from the annual donations that are channeled at providing adequate residence, partial health care support and monthly stipends. Support to Pakistani refugees such as refugee status determination and the provision of services and assistance in urban areas is carried out by the UNHCR Beijing which is directly financed by The Chinese Government. Statistics from UNHCR's website clearly enumerates China's contribution to refugees temporarily settled and awaiting relocation in third countries. Table 4 shows that yearly contributions to the UNHCR have been ranging between 250,000 and 651,906 US dollars during the period of 2000 to 2010 with the largest amount of contribution in year 2008. The donation for year 2008 increased considerably due the UNHCR's involvement in rescue operations in the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake on May 12, 2008.

<b>Year</b>	<b>USD</b>
2010	250,000
2009	250,000
2008	651,906
2007	250,000
2006	250,000
2005	250,000
2004	250,000
2003	250,000
2002	283,600
2001	312,700
2000	250,000

**TABLE 4: Contributions, in US dollars, of China to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 2000-2010 (Excerpt from [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org))**

The figures in Table 4 demonstrate that China has been very magnanimous towards the UN agency which makes sure that the donations, manifold, can bring appropriate protection and assistance to refugees. According to the needs assessment UN staff, each refugee

benefits from a monthly 600 RMB (Renminbi, also called Chinese Yuan) as monthly stipend for food and general expenses, added with 1500 RMB as provision for rent and reimbursed ninety percent of their medical expenses. According to China Daily's April 17, 2011 issue, the average salary in China as to April 2011 being 1310 RMB, ranging between 1000 RMB to 1500 RMB all over China, while a refugee family with one child will receive 1800 RMB per month, reveals that urban refugees are considered 'well-catered' according to the Community Services Assistant at UNHCR Beijing.

## ***2.2 The road from Pakistan to China***

While China remains chief donor for the temporary settlement of Pakistani refugees, the UNHCR's presence is driven to ensure assistance to refugees who crossed borders. Still, how and why did the Pakistani refugees end up in China? A straightforward answer to these two puzzles would be the association of the refugees to the Ahmaddiya community. "Membership of a particular social group" is one of the five grounds enumerated in Article 1A (2) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees whereby a particular social group is defined as

a group of persons who share a common characteristic other than their risk of being persecuted, or who are perceived as a group by society. The characteristic will often be one which is innate, unchangeable, or which is otherwise fundamental to identity, conscience or the exercise of one's human rights (UNHCR 2002).

The Pakistani refugees interviewed in Yanjiao and Langfang are Ahmadis, they belong to the Ahmadiyya community, one of the religious minorities of Islamic faith who, according to one respondent, "believe in God, (the) same God, same prophet, same Coran and recite the same prayers...with the same core issues."<sup>11</sup> Victims of constant religious

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<sup>11</sup> Excerpt of interview with Manshad who is lives in Langfang, has two children of five and six years old and

violence in their country of origin, they lived in constant fear such that their “children could not attend schools, (they) couldn’t go to work and were moving a lot”<sup>12</sup> and, in some cases, with their extended families rejecting them, these Ahmadis decided to flee. For most of the refugees, the accusations leveled against them have been based on ‘in Pakistan, they think we people, we deserve to be killed and that’s how they will receive blessings.’<sup>13</sup> According to Amnesty International and BBC News, constitutional reforms in 1947 by Pakistan's first elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared “Ahmadiyya non-Muslims” and Pakistan’s Penal Code views the profession of Ahmadi faith as a criminal offense. Any Muslim with similar faith needs to be denounced and persecuted and starting in mid-1991, the Pakistan Penal Code declared death penalty on those who dare offend, "defil(e)" the name of Prophet Mohammed. Pakistanis associated to the Ahmadiyya group have to be accused, arrested and will even face death sentence on grounds of conviction (BBC 2010, Amnesty International 1993).

Beyond the atrocities they faced in their home country, the common fate of experiencing constant fear and persecution has resulted in frustration and anger. The eldest of the refugees, who spent almost eight years in exile in China, voiced out his grievances:

We can’t celebrate our religious conscience... we can’t say Assam in the mosque and they think if they will kill us they will get a home in heaven. That’s why they want to kill us, just like animals... so we have no life there. We have no freedom there, we have no religious rights, nothing, nothing, even if someone knows they will look for a chance to kill us.

and his son Kashif to add that “even the police (in Pakistan) did not protect us, they also persecute us.” Young refugees also underscored the lack of security in Pakistan. Amir, 19,

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was working as a teacher prior to his departure from Pakistan.

<sup>12</sup> Testimony of Kashif’s second brother who voices out his inability to understand why his parents were constantly moving to new places when he was still a child

<sup>13</sup> Excerpts from Z’s interview

the eldest of a family of five, speaks of his fear but also of his appreciation of China's hospitality and the fact that China "changed (his) life." According to him, "in China, we have security, we are safe".

When persecution became intolerable and entry visas to other countries of intended destinations proved difficult to obtain, the decision to flee to China was based on proximity considerations that would be juxtaposed with long, circuitous and mountainous journeys on the Pakistani-Chinese border or direct flights to Urumqi.

Of the five Ahmadi Pakistani families interviewed, who arrived in China between 2003 and 2009, four of them came by plane and while one came by bus and train, spending eight days travelling considerable distances. Some of them first went to Islamabad, others to Urumqi with the intention to 'escape lives' <sup>14</sup> and to finally reach Beijing where they applied for asylum. For most of them it was an issue of life or death: to stay and die or leave and live. While persecution, torture and outright discrimination that resulted from their membership to the Ahmadiyya religious group have brought these Pakistani refugees to China in the first place, the long lost hope of 'safety' and 'dignity' in Pakistan makes repatriation difficult (UNHCR 2004). Without legal rights in China, resettlement to third countries becomes the only durable solution that Ahmadis can contemplate. As a consequence, Pakistani refugees of Ahmadi faith in their first country of asylum will have to immerse in the social fabric of the Chinese structures for several years before resettlement in a third state.

The following chapter will, therefore, aim at filling the lacuna on the integration of

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<sup>14</sup> Term used by Kashif's father, who has been in China for eight years when the interview was conducted and who was persecuted based on his belonging to the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. His wife was tortured after he fled to Islamabad then China and they joined him in Beijing several years later.

Pakistani refugees in socio-economic, healthcare, educational, cultural and linguistic fields during their protracted stay in Hebei province, China but, more closely, provide an ethnographic study of refugees at an early and a more developed stage of integration in the Northern Chinese environment. All these factors together with the constant financial help from the Chinese Government and the degree of social “mixing” and interaction with the local population, amongst others, will contribute to offer a descriptive analysis of the integration of Pakistani refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang.

### 2.3 Sampling



The Pakistani urban refugees interviewed have been reached through the UNHCR that provided information as to the location and number of refugees in given areas. Hebei province was selected as it is estimated to host the largest number of recognized Pakistani refugees.

Map 3: Map of Hebei Province ( Travel China.com)

The protected Ahmadi refugees are scattered in Yanjiao and Langfang. In Langfang, the fact that the refugee families which have recently relocated to Hebei region was viewed as the most appropriate sampling to evaluate refugees at an initial stage integration. Where as the Pakistani refugees in Yanjiao have, on average, been in China for 3.82 years with two

years in Yanjiao, the refugees in Langfang have been in China for two years with one and a half months in Hebei by the time the interviews were conducted.

However, the empirical study of the integration of the twenty-five refugees in Langfang and Hebei might also lead to limitations such as the representativeness of these refugees of all Pakistani refugees in China. The proximity of these two refugee communities to Beijing where the UNHCR's main office is situated and the fact that Hebei authorities are generally more lenient when compared to local authorities in other parts of Mainland already reveal more conducive elements to partly successful integration. Moreover, the fact that the refugee families approached in Langfang, have relatively younger children, below age ten, than the refugee families in Yanjiao, below age thirty-three, makes comparative analysis of integration more difficult. In this respect, I will take a descriptive approach to the sampling population.

**TABLE 5**  
**AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENTS**

	<b>Yanjiao</b>	<b>Langfang</b>
Adults (above 18)	11	4
Children below 10	2	4
Between 10-18	4	

## Chapter III

### **3.1 Markers and Means**

According to Ager and Strang (2004), achievement in “‘public’ contexts” such as employment, housing, education and healthcare have been signaled as important factors fostering or impeding integration. Based on their study of refugee communities in Islington and Pollokshaws, Ager and Strang(2004) defined education as boosting the chances of employability, fostering the attainment of educational capacities and skills and building grounds for ‘mixing’ with the wider community. Further, along with ‘Education’, they represented ‘Housing’ (in terms of location and housing arrangements) as facilitators or hindrances to integration, ‘Employment’ as the promotion of economic security and self-respect and ‘Health care’ with its service characteristics as the “key ‘markers (of means (to)’ integration.”

#### **3.1.1 Employment**

In China’s context, the non-eligibility to legal citizenship serves as a deterrent for Pakistani adult refugees to engage in the economic mainstream of China. Lacking the opportunity to establish sustainable livelihoods through access to the job market alongside the state’s reluctance to shoulder legal responsibilities, Pakistani refugees solely rely on the economic assistance from the UNHCR, local NGOs and volunteers from the local community.

There is no distinction between the refugee groups in Yanjiao and Langfang as to the inaccessibility to legal employment. Among the adult parent respondents, nine of the twelve

respondents (75%) were previously employed in their country of origin either in the educational, IT or business sector while the rest were either unemployed or students. While most women hardly had any employment background, almost all men were able to earn a livelihood in Pakistan prior to accusations leveled against their religious association to the Ahmadiyya community. Kashif, one of the refugees in Yanjiao, “was working in Nestle and with his father in business before (he) fled from Pakistan.”<sup>15</sup> Others like Kashif’s father, Kashif himself, Z, Nasir and Shafiqa are all well-educated and held meaningful positions prior to the accusations on their Ahmadi association while refugees like Nasir worked as IT operator and his wife and friend Manshad used to work as teachers in Pakistan.

**TABLE 6**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PAKISTANI REFUGEES PRIOR TO FLIGHT**

	Previously Employed	Previously Unemployed	Total
Men- Yanjiao	5	—	5
-Langfang	2	—	2
Women-Yanjiao	1	2	3
-Langfang	1	1	2
Total	9	3	12

From the perspective of the Chinese legislation, China’s Regulations on the 1996 Provisions on Administration of Employment of Foreigners in China and, as stated by Foster (2007), refugees are excluded from employment realms as the government is unable to “accommodate ‘refugee claims with an economic element.’” Moreover, under Article 7(5) of the ‘Administration of Employment of Foreigners in China’, any foreigner “seeking employment in China (should have a) ... valid passport ... other international travel document in lieu of the passport.” Pakistani refugees are unable to satisfy the above specific requirements for employment concessions and, therefore, they remain solely protected of

<sup>15</sup> Excerpt from interview with Kashif, 33 year old Pakistani man.

*'non-refoulement'* due to the lack of national asylum legislation.

Since Pakistani refugees are barred from income-generating labor spheres in the local area and the city, they, therefore, rely largely on the UNHCR's monthly stipend but since the standard of living in Langfang and Yanjiao, and in China in general, is skyrocketing and resettlement application processes can prove slow, many of the refugees are frustrated at their lack of participation in the labor market. "We cannot work" are constant statements from heads of the families interviewed.

Grabska(2005) in his research on the Sudanese refugees in Egypt, El Abed( 2003) in a study of the Palestinian refugees in Egypt and Campbell ( 2006) have all emphasized that refugees are equally denied participation in the labor market, to the means to sustain economic livelihoods, have no source of income and, hence, have recourse to the black market. In China, it is suspected by the UNHCR that several adult Pakistani refugees work on a part-time basis. Although there are no official statistics on their employment status, the UNHCR staff revealed that some refugees were observed as "better off" compared to others, implying that the latter were employed by the host community.<sup>16</sup> However, since there are no substantial facts to investigate the exactness of such assumptions and negative responses from refugees when questioned on their involvement in the economic spheres of the country of temporary settlement, the employment status of the refugees cannot be ascertained.

On the other hand, many of the young respondents indicated that, to combat boredom and unproductive life patterns, there are placements and volunteer work opportunities offered by local NGOs and, presently, several young adults in Yanjiao, aged between

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<sup>16</sup> Informal interview with the Programme Officer at the UNHCR

nineteen and thirty have taken unpaid positions to engage in mainstream society and combat idleness. According to several studies, volunteering is seen as a way to combat “feelings of powerlessness caused by not being able to work in the UK” (Yap, Byrne and Davidson 2010), boost self-confidence (Erel and Tomlinson 2005) and combat isolation and depression (Palmer and Ward 2007). The majority of Yanjiao’s youth refugees have reported various reasons for volunteering, among which are the preparation for entry into the labor market, upgrading of working skills and building of occupational attainment. Surprisingly, Yanjiao refugees above forty, who were formerly participatory to the economic mainstream of Pakistan, were not involved in community activities and deplored that the inaccessibility to the labor market as the main hindrance to integration. Likewise, the refugees in Langfang did not undertake any voluntary or social commitment. One reason for this is the fact that they are younger refugee families with children under ten years old and with at least one adult refugee formerly involved in the educational field in Pakistan, meaning that both families value the importance of education for their children and admitted dedicating at least half a day homeschooling the latter. Overall, all refugees in Langfang and Yanjiao who used to work in Pakistan (eight in Yanjiao and four in Langfang) supported Hypothesis 1, i.e., the lack of employment reduces integration of both Langfang and Yanjiao urban Pakistani refugees within the host community.

**TABLE 7**  
**VOLUNTEERING RESPONSE AMONG REFUGEE YOUTH**

<b>Yanjiao Refugees</b>		<b>Langfang Refugees</b>	
Volunteer	3	Volunteer	—
In-volunteer	2	In-volunteer	4
<b>Total</b>	5		4

### 3.1.2 Education

Besides employment, education equally occupies an important share in the promotion

of social integration. With much frustration on the inaccessibility to educational facilities, many parent refugees are unsatisfied with the restrictions they faced and were, hence, less likely to develop a sense of belonging to the local community. “For refugee children ( and refugee parents), schools are experienced as the most important place of contact with members of local host communities, playing an important role in establishing relationships supportive of integration” where integration in local schools would equalize integration in the dwelling place (Ager and Strang 2008).

In general, “governments are presented as the main duty-bearer of providing access to education and as the main drivers of educational policy ... it is usually accepted that international and non-governmental associations step in to provide additional capacity” (Chelpi-den Hamer 2011:73). The UNHCR and individual non-state actors intervene to provide schooling continuity opportunities to refugee children, often excluded from admission in local schools. Such initiatives through various forms of informal, vocational training and education can be qualified as complementing the UNHCR’s educational response but these approaches have triggered discussion on the distinction between formal and informal education. According to Hoppers (2006), there are two forms of education, ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ education where ‘non-formal’ educational programs cover myriad areas, from home-schooling to host community members volunteering, literacy projects, youth skills development, vocational and peer training and, in most instances, this approach is unable to equalize ‘formal education’ (Chelpi-den Hamer, 2011: 73).

Even though under the principles of the Convention Relating to the Status of refugees, it is the obligation of signatory states to apply the educational clause of the Convention on the

Rights of the Child that encompasses the right of access to elementary education following the first three months of settlement in country of asylum, many states are unable comply to the Convention verbatim. China has formerly granted Vietnamese refugees public assistance and education on par with their nationals. Current legal restrictions on refugee access to government-funded educational institutions are yet another dilemma. The main reason specified by the UNHCR officials is the status of refugees acting as main hindrance to educational supply. Without clear policies for educational institutions to follow, which could have been enacted through the implementation of national asylum legislation, refugee children are denied school placements. Most local schools have barred refugee children from their institutions. Accessibility to state-funded educational institutions is carried out on a discretion basis. During field trip in Langfang, ongoing negotiations between UNHCR, refugee parents and public schools were progressively proving optimistic where one Chinese elementary school has agreed to take refugee children on a 'part-time' basis.<sup>17</sup>

The case in Yanjiao exemplifies the challenges related to refugee children's education continuity. Refugee children were taught informally by local teachers, volunteers, UNVs or attended the UNHCR refugee vocational training center.<sup>18</sup> The UNHCR has rented an apartment within 'the colony' to ensure accessibility and convenience to the refugee children and posted a UN Volunteer and several interns to teach refugee children. Although the UNHCR, local individuals and volunteers attempt to promote the continuation of schooling of refugee children, secondary school students and young adults, mainly aged

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<sup>17</sup> According to Manshad, who has two children and intends to send his children to local schools, one local school in Langfang is willing to take his children one day per week.

<sup>18</sup> The Yanjiao Vocational Training Center was established in 2009 by the UNCHR, where English and Chinese classes are currently conducted for children aged six to ten years old.

fourteen and above, are not homeschooled but instead engage in sports activities, volunteer work and sewing activities. Despite the fact that the latter have attained linguistic fluency and minimum standards in academic fields, the inaccessibility to public secondary school or university can lead to occupational disparity with non-refugee populations upon resettlement in third states.

**TABLE 8**  
**AGE RANGE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH RESPONDENTS**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Yanjiao Refugees</b>	<b>Langfang Refugees</b>	<b>Total</b>
Below 10	2	4	6
Between 11-18	4	–	4
Between 19-25	3	–	3
Total	9	4	13

In terms of linguistic skills, Yanjiao refugee children and youth below the age of twenty-five were both fluent in English and Mandarin. Out of the eight children and youth interacted with in Yanjiao (aged between eleven and eighteen years old), five of them were fluent in Urdu, English and Mandarin. One of them formerly attended school in Beijing and was fluent in English and Mandarin; two of them learned English from their parents and Mandarin from the community or friends they met during Badminton; and one of them is solely fluent in English and Pakistani. Although these findings confirm the inaccessibility to formal host education, the implementation of the UNHCR refugee training center and the promotion of outreach education continuation projects by individual NGOs and the local community have proved effective in mitigating short-term effects of educational setbacks of refugee children aged six to ten years old. Nonetheless, for refugee youth aged fourteen and above, non-entitlement to schooling can disrupt educational patterns and have potential impact on adaptation and employment prospects upon resettlement. Among the respondents

in Yanjiao, thirteen out of seventeen, 76.5 percent, of the respondents qualified the inaccessibility to local schools as a major setback to positive integration, supporting Hypothesis 1, refugees at a more advanced and an initial stage of integration cannot become part and parcel of the Chinese society unless provided access with educational welfare structures.

In Langfang, the four refugee children were home-schooled by their parents, were fluent in Pakistani, Urdu and Basic English and were awaiting acceptance by local schools as of April 2011, reinforcing the fact that the refugee parents would prefer formal education, host-based curriculum, as they are aware of their prolonged stay in China and that 'their children cannot be set back too far in primary school'<sup>19</sup>. Hence, refugee parents would not differentiate between host- based and home-based curriculum (Chelpi-den Hamer 2011). The refugee families interviewed in Langfang have children below the age of six who were mainly educated by their parents, former teachers in Pakistan. Among them is Nasir, a married Pakistani man with two children and whose wife worked as teacher in Pakistan, who admits that they "finally they came to Langfang one and a half months ago. (Their) kids miss school very much."<sup>20</sup> In April 2011, negotiations with local schools were yet to be finalized but Manshad, a former teacher in Pakistan and also a refugee in Langfang, admitted that meetings with state-funded schools would ensure refugee children's accessibility once a week. Both families emphasized the fact that there would be no positive integration in terms of educational 'markers and means' if their children remain unschooled.

Based on observation in both Yanjiao and Langfang, regardless of recent or advanced

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Nasir in Langfang on April 8, 2011

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

settlement, the inaccessibility to local education, especially for head of families and the youth above eighteen, considerably exacerbated their protracted situation. For young refugees, including Waqas, male Pakistani refugee of twenty years old, these years of waiting for resettlement are considered “wasted golden years” where they could have attended schools, universities or enrolled in vocational training programs.<sup>21</sup> Of the nine refugees aged below twenty-five in Yanjiao, eight of them expressed the desire to attend schools and the four refugee children in Langfang were awaiting acceptance by state-funded schools. Although the refugee children below 18 are unable to express their integration within educational perspectives, those above 18 and, mainly refugee parents highlighted the inability to immerse in the fabric of the Chinese society due to the inaccessibility to formal education, confirming Hypothesis 1, inadmissibility to educational institutions negatively impacts integration within the host community.

### **3.1.3 Housing**

Yanjiao is forty-five minutes, and Langfang is two hours, drive from the outside built-up agglomerations of Beijing. Besides geographical proximity to Mainland China’s capital city, access to affordable housing is essential for Pakistani urban refugees’ personal security, a conducive element to their integration. With a monthly housing allowance of 1500 RMB per family, refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang can rent apartments with prices ranging from 1000-1200 RMB, the remaining sum being spent on the payment of utilities. The cheaper housing prices and standard of living in these two places and education prospects have been factors encouraging refugee families to move from city centers to

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<sup>21</sup> Waqas, twenty year old Pakistani male who has been in China for four years by the time the interview was conducted.

Hebei province. The refugees interviewed in Yanjiao were once in Beijing and those in Langfang were living in Guangzhou, one of the most populated cities in Southern China.

Accordingly, when considering residential integration, the refugees in Yanjiao find their strategic location, relative proximity to Beijing, affordable housing prices and familiarity with the Yanjiao community (most of them have lived in Yanjiao for almost two and a half years) as fully conducive to integration. The sole grievance of the latter refugee families was related to the fact that their relocation has resulted in literal isolation from the expatriate community in Beijing with which they formerly developed close ties.

In contrast, the families in Langfang expressed the barriers of communication with local “doctors (who) don’t speak English”, the weakened social network, with fewer “Muslim friends, Chinese Muslim friends” as compared to Guangzhou and the longer tenancy policies as serious impediments to adaptation in Hebei province.<sup>22</sup> The transfer to Langfang, although tinted with positive prospects of enrolling the children in local schools and the manifest ‘sincerity’ of Chinese Muslim friends they were acquainted to, was still fraught with difficulties and adverse to positive integration. One refugee parent in Langfang was quoted saying that “when (he) was in Guangzhou (he) loved (his) house,” his wife emphasizing that “he wouldn’t leave the house,” highlighting the security that accommodation provided and the fact that the new housing conditions with the unfamiliar tenancy requirements was far from being conducive to integration. Hence, when balancing the pros and cons of integration on accommodation standards, the Pakistani refugees in Langfang would qualify themselves as poorly integrated in the urban fabric, although, they

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<sup>22</sup> S, Pakistani woman with two children, moved to Langfang in February 2011

acknowledge that, *a priori*, integration is a *process* and demands more than a few months' time to become fully immersed in the fabric of Langfang's community.

Based on fieldwork, it can be concluded that the refugee families in Langfang were not as well-integrated as their country mates in Yanjiao, highlighting the fact that there are other hindrances to successful adaptation, especially for newly temporarily settled refugees. Shelter, with its accompanied geographical location, can be problematic on levels of integration, supporting Hypothesis 3.1: *The lack of familiarity with the new environment reduces integration for Langfang refugees within the host community*, sustaining weaker adaptation for refugees at an initial stage of integration. Notwithstanding, relocation has considerable influence on the refugees' psychological uncertainty associated with moving. In other words, location and constant transition can lead to severe health complications.

#### **3.1.4 Health care**

Much of the literature does not consider the potentially difficult health experiences of refugee populations (McKeary and Newbold 2010). Generally, refugees have more serious health concerns than most migrants due to the transition periods and long journeys in quest of asylum (Koser 1997). Similarly, urban Pakistani refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang have, in the past, faced myriad economic and social hardships which eventually resulted in physical health problems and, in some cases, to chronic psychological uncertainty, trauma, that need constant professional healthcare. The lack of meaningful occupational status punctuated by the long years of "waiting, waiting and waiting"<sup>23</sup>, with no immediate prospect of resettlement, can exacerbate the already stressful situation and have obvious

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<sup>23</sup> Kashif's father testimony

ramifications on their physical, mental and emotional health.

Unlike Chinese citizens who need to finance their own medical expenses, urban refugees are reimbursed ninety percent of their medical bills and are entitled to the same national healthcare package as their Chinese counterparts. Under the mandate of the UNHCR, urban refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang can have access to local hospitals and medical centers and the expenses incurred are refunded upon proof of receipt of consultation, operation or medication. However, for refugees suffering from chronic diseases, the UNHCR provides 100 percent reimbursement, acknowledging the burden of medical expenditure on the refugee's monthly stipend.<sup>24</sup> In Yanjiao, the Sino-American hospital which agreed to the direct billing of the refugees' medical expenses to the UNHCR office used to facilitate provision of health care services. The same direct billing method is still being applied to six psychiatric hospitals in Beijing for the psychological treatment and rehabilitation of refugees who suffer from chronic psychological stress, depression and mental instability. However, due to several instances of abuse both from the refugees and medical staff in the form of excessive prescriptions, the direct billing to the Sino-American hospital was cancelled. As a consequence, the new system of 90 percent reimbursement of medical fees was implemented.<sup>25</sup>

Upfront payments have, since the elimination of direct billing system, become source of stress for several families. Two families, twelve out of seventeen refugees in Yanjiao and four out of the four adult refugees in Langfang stated that upfront payments have affected their monthly budget arrangements. Two of the three families interviewed in Yanjiao

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<sup>24</sup> Informal interview with the UNHCR's Assistant Community Services Officer

<sup>25</sup> Informal interview with the UNHCR's Finance and Programme officer

expressed concern as to the difficulties they faced with upfront payments. “We get 600 RMB every month, 400 RMB needs to be paid for his medical fees” relates Amir’s family who has one child suffering from chronic breathing problems. Among the twenty-five respondents, all of them were eligible for health services, nine refugees from Yanjiao attended medical centers or major hospitals in Yanjiao or Beijing for treatment and only one refugee, a pregnant woman, attended hospitals in Langfang. Although, general satisfaction has been expressed as to the healthcare service in hospitals, refugees who arrived in Hebei at a later stage had potential language barriers when confronting medical practitioners, medical test results. In a linguistically homogeneous urban environment like Beijing, language and interpretation can become hindrances to health care access, especially for refugee adults aged thirty and above as it is practically impossible for hospitals to retain local members who are able to communicate in English. The refugees who are not sufficiently conversant in specific medical terms were usually accompanied by a fluent co-national, Chinese or the UNHCR staff to communicate with the medical staff. The refugees in Yanjiao, who were at a more developed stage of integration in the dwelling place, had more established contacts within local health care systems: “We have friends in hospitals, nurses who speak English...and we can manage communicating our illnesses, we know the medical terms.”<sup>26</sup> Although most of the refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang confirmed that they were assisted by their extended social network and the refugee community to overcome communication difficulties in hospitals and clinics, two out of seventeen refugees, eleven percent, in Yanjiao revealed linguistic barriers upon encounters with local hospital staff while four out of the

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<sup>26</sup> Excerpt from Kashif’s interview

four adult refugees in Langfang, confirmed interpretation challenges when attending hospitals, meaning that refugees at an initial stage of integration, would encounter more difficulties with local health care systems than those at a more developed phase. Further, the survey on difficulties encountered with health care confirmed that, based on Research Question 3, there are, besides communication hurdles, alternative hindrances to successful integration during temporary residence: upfront payments, long waiting hours, amongst others (See Table 9). These can impede integration within the host community while healthcare itself, the provision medical care packages, is not one of the main hindrances to local integration.

Excerpt from interview with S, pregnant Pakistani woman, who moved to Langfang in February 2011

My main problem is communication in hospitals. In Guangzhou, we had many Muslim friends, many Chinese Muslim friends. In Guangzhou doctors can speak English and university students used to help us... here I don't know what the doctor was telling me about my baby. I don't know what she was saying.

**TABLE 9**  
**HEALTH CARE USE AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

	<b>Yanjiao refugees</b>	<b>Langfang refugees</b>
Patients of Chronic diseases	4	—
Access to health care 6 months prior to interviews	5	1
Problems encountered:		
Language	2	4
Upfront payments	11	4
Waiting lists/Line ups	4	—
Other	—	—
Costs of medical expenses	6	1

### **3.2 Social connections**

Reflecting the range of relationships that people noted as potentially relevant to a sense of integration, these domains (“Social bridges”, “social links” and “social bonds”) seek to capture experience of relationships within one’s own community, experience of ‘mixing’

with other communities, and relationships with services and the state.

Ager and Strang (2004)

### 3.2.1 Social bridges

In protracted situations, refugees hold diverging perspectives on the temporariness of their stay in the guest community. The fact that the refugees in Langfang and Yanjiao have yet been accepted for resettlement and need to wait several years in temporary transition before proceeding elsewhere heavily influence their personal stance towards urban residents of diverse ethnic backgrounds and their attitude vis à vis local integration. According to Bakewell, in most situations, refugees who haven't reached their intended terminus would retain attachment to their community of origin while others, who, having fled from their homeland, intend to become assimilated in the new environment (Bakewell 2000: 372). In the case of Yanjiao and Langfang communities, the local people of different religious, cultural and ethnic background and the expatriate community were depicted as "friends".<sup>27</sup> In line with Berry's (1980) acculturation model, findings have additionally demonstrated an extended social network even though refugees within a new environment had a significantly less expanded network than their peers who have been residing in Yanjiao for more than two years.

Social ties and close community interactions are part of the coping strategies employed by Yanjiao and Langfang refugees in the process of awaiting resettlement. The restricted access to important markers and means for successful adaptation have not inhibited refugee communities from establishing essential community networks. The participation of refugees

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<sup>27</sup> Response of all refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang to thoughts on the community/area

in social activities (sports, community groups, cultural and outdoor activities) has been crucial to their integration in Yanjiao.

When compared to Yanjiao refugees, the four adult refugees in Langfang had less Chinese friends. On average, they have three Chinese Muslim friends. Nevertheless, all of them qualified their new dwelling place as “more friendly, more friendly than the residents in Guangzhou”.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, it was noticed that, although the refugees in Langfang, have been facing accommodation hurdles upon arrival, they have, within six weeks, ascertained positive relations in the neighborhood. Manshad and Nasir, in Langfang, revealed that they have already established vital contacts with ethnic minorities within the host community. “Our Muslim friends are very good”<sup>29</sup> and “They love our kids.”<sup>30</sup>

In Yanjiao, stronger ties with the local people were detected. On average, refugees, below the age of thirty-three, have reported having around twenty Chinese friends while the older generation has established friendships with their children’s friends and the latter’s respective families. Besides contact with the host population, the refugees also have regular meetings with individuals coming from ethnic minorities or expatriates living in China. Friends of UNHCR comprises mainly of expat professionals who have held fund-raising activities such as clothes drive during winter times and secured unpaid internship and volunteer opportunities for young refugees in Yanjiao. Given the involvement in community and humanitarian organizations, the Yanjiao refugees were able to develop mutual empathy with non-refugee populations as well as stimulate participation in societal dimensions, transcending ethnic differences and cultural backgrounds.

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<sup>28</sup> Excerpt from Nasir, married Pakistani man with two children.

<sup>29</sup> Excerpt from interview with Manshad, Pakistani man, who settled in Langfang in February 2011

<sup>30</sup> Excerpt from interview with Nasir, father of two children in Langfang

Based on the findings on the ‘social bridges’ level, the study in Yanjiao and Langfang has proved that integration is a two-way process whereby both the refugee and ethnic, cultural and religious communities are able to seek positive threads of interaction, even amidst temporary settlement. At the same time, it is obvious that refugees who spent more time within a community will consolidate stronger ties with these groups than those who are at a preliminary phase of integration. Nonetheless, since the Pakistani refugees have been victims of persecution on religious grounds in their country of origin, they showed their reluctance to attend religious festivals or gatherings. They do not want to voice out their association to Ahmadiyya’s community in the country of asylum as they believe that it might endanger their safety and security and, again, become targets of religious harassment.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.2.2 Social links**

During settlement, short-term or permanent, Ager and Strang (2008:180) refer to the feeling ‘at home’ (which) relates to the friendliness of the people in the environment, the mutual understanding-where the refugee develops a sense of belonging and security in the host society. Consequently, on the informal non-institutional level, regular exchange between refugees and the host population was highlighted in various dimensions. The regular interaction with hosts were individual outreach by volunteers, normally Yanjiao college students, teachers and friends who, given their direct contact with refugees, devoted time to support the refugees morally and materially. At the institutional level, the UNHCR conducts visits twice a month to refugee families’ houses to both Yanjiao and Langfang for

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<sup>31</sup> Conversation with Manshad, refugee in Langfang

needs assessments purposes and to resolve interpretative problems with the host community's service sector. Regular sessions, organized by the UNHCR, also bring together refugees and the PSB (Public Security Bureau) officers to reassure refugees of safety and security and encourage two-way discussions and grounds for dialogue and clarifications.

Langfang and Yanjiao refugees, on the institutional level, have similar degrees of formalized interactions with UNHCR and the local authorities acting through the PSB. On non-official grounds, the encounters with local NGOs and the guest community were relatively higher among Yanjiao refugees. Recently settled refugees in Langfang have conversely reported zero contact with refugee outreach organizations. A conversation with one of the members of Friends of UNHCR revealed the intention of the NGO to extend their network to Langfang. Accordingly, I speculate that the longer period of time spent in Langfang, the more integrated the protracted refugees will become.

### **3.2.3 Social Bonds**

Quote from the UNHCR Community Services Officer who visits the refugees twice every month:

I find the, particularly the refugees in Yanjiao, is probably the most established b/c of the developed contacts...they mingle with the local population, there have many friends, you know, many people in Yanjiao are very open to them being there.

Depicted as the ethnic, national or religious identity within the community, social bonds is relatively high among the Yanjiao and Langfang refugee families. Several refugees and heads of families, despite their Ahmadiyya faith, have, not only excelled at emulating Chinese cuisine, eating habits and savoir vivre but have also demonstrated strong participation in national and religious festivities while maintaining their Ahmadi identity. Fifteen of the seventeen refugees reported participation in local social activities, while 100

percent of the sample in Yanjiao acknowledged participation in local festivities such as Chinese New Year celebrations. The main trigger of the close social relationships was through Badminton where young refugees were given the platform to practice and gradually convey their talent to their Chinese peers. For Kashif and his two brothers, established in Yanjiao for over two years, “it began with a game, then two, then...Through this game, we became very close to (the Chinese), so we are very good friends. Everyday we meet them, almost every week-end, they invite us for dinner.” The same applies to Amir, 19, who qualified the last four years he spent in China as ‘very very happy’ and emphasized that his participation in Badminton tournaments made him “number one in the city. Thousands of people want to learn from (him), they watch (him) play on Sundays.” Amir was the only respondent who showed his desire to stay in China, for the friends and community he regularly interacts with and for the security it provided. “In Pakistan, we were afraid. In China, we have security, we are safe.” Friendships were built on courts and further extended to “activities like going to KTV (karaoke) and snooker”, invitations to dinners, local celebrations and activities that created renewed social relationships.<sup>32</sup>

Kashif, married Pakistani man in Yanjiao, 33 years old

When they celebrate Chinese New Year, they celebrate with us, yes, we also visit their homes...we also meet and sit with their family together but we don't eat *zhu rou* (pork). All of our friends know that we can't eat *zhu rou*. We invite them for our festival, they are very happy, they come. It's a two-way process interaction.

For Amir, Pakistani refugee of 19 years old

Many times we celebrate Chinese New year, it's kind of a busy day. Every day (during Chinese New Year celebrations) is a busy day.

The daily contact with the host community, whether through sports activities or

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Kashif's brother, April 6, 2011

participation in local festivities, was observed during intermingling with the refugees. Amidst observations, I have also noted that the refugee families had adopted a new version of Chinese-Pakistani culinary habits, which further underlined their integration in Doná and Berry's terms: the retention of cultural identity and the quest for positive relations with the asylum provider. Despite their exposure to Chinese culture and traditions, the respondents expressed the need to preserve their cultural and ethnic background. According to Landau (2004:28), "the short-term effects of this may be segregation of 'foreigners' and 'natives' within a given urban environment". Although this statement is *prima facie* valid for refugees who are newly settled, it cannot be applied to Langfang and Yanjiao Pakistani refugees. From close observation of the *two-way* interaction process between the urban society and the refugees, integration was perceived as their current adaptation status. For these two refugee groups, the most successful means of cultural conservation was to remain close to their own nationals, also refugees in transition, along with regular interaction with the host population. One of the refugees expressed the need to remain committed to the Pakistani 'colony' as they have been through similar hardships, shared common experiences and committed friendships. To him, "We are people from the same country, we have prayers together and this is how we are surviving, if anyone has any trouble, we are here for one another."<sup>33</sup> They cannot relate to non-refugees when it comes to the shared values and can only find comfort in supporting each other culturally and morally while retaining close relations with the local society. In addition, the fact that these urban Pakistani refugees have been through religious discrimination that scarred and victimized them in socio-political

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<sup>33</sup> Zaki, male Pakistani man living in China for more than seven years and who revealed having been persecuted for 25 years in his country of origin

contexts of stigmatization and displacement explains this need to preserve close bonds with their people.

Owing to their current state of temporary settlement and their history of flight and persecution, they long for stability that can be recreated by preserving the cultural and religious norms of their country place of origin. They will feel secure if they stay with refugees with whom they share the same past, values, purposes and a common culture. Unlike Grabska's(2005) account of Sudanese refugees in Cairo and thousands more refugees living in protracted exile conditions around the world who do not build social networks with the urban residents, Pakistani refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang, during the "long painful bus stop or waiting room (situation) they have to cope with until they reach their desired destination," have developed strong attachment within the guest community they live in while preserving their cultural, religious and ethnic identity. They are not "invisible in the city" as the refugees portrayed in former refugee and photographer Zalmai's photographs of urban refugees living in Malaysia and South Africa. The strong incentive to immerse and become acculturated in the host society is very much characterized by the fact that they respond positively to Doná and Berry's (1999) Berry's two main issues. The case studies of Yanjiao and Langfang exemplify that the refugees are part and parcel of the communities they live in, aware of the host community's cultural norms and hold strong attachment to the refugee circles who live in proximity.

### **3.3 Facilitators**

Issues of safety and security were acknowledged as...crucial prerequisite for establishing such social connections in their locality... Language capability and broader issues of cultural understandings (of majority communities by minority communities and vice versa) were also highlighted as significant.

### 3.3.1 Language

Besides, the wide range of legal, financial, employment barriers urban refugees usually face, they are often confronted with linguistic barriers in their efforts to establish sustainable livelihoods. Linguistic barriers and the lack of incentive to learn the host language are more serious components that signal non-integrative dimensions and can act as severe hindrances to interactions and inclusion within guest communities. Language facilitates social connections, interactions with the host population and can extend social networks within guest communities. During the empirical study, I have noticed that the majority of the refugees in Yanjiao spoke Mandarin very fluently. Although there were practically no indicators of linguistic alienation among the young refugee population in Yanjiao, the latter's parents were not fluent in Mandarin and were heavily dependent on their children for interpretation. Age is an important hindrance to the effort input to learn the language. The fact that the refugee families are in transit has been signaled as a major obstacle to learning Mandarin. In Langfang, the refugee adults, aged between thirty and forty-two, are more or less acquainted with the language. With regular interactions with Chinese Muslims and local Chinese in Guangzhou and accessing to the Internet as an important learning tool to improve their fluency and reading skills, they were able to become linguistically independent, renting houses on their own, bargaining in shops and purchasing daily necessities. In areas of medical procurement, as can be recalled from interpretation problems in medical centers have been mostly detected among Langfang refugee families.

Based on the qualitative study of the refugees in both areas, I came to the conclusion that refugees in Langfang, due to the comparatively short duration of stay in China, are less

fluent in Mandarin than those in Yanjiao but I expect that, with more established contacts within the host society, they will, gradually, overcome the linguistic barriers.

### **3.3.2 Safety and stability**

Recent studies have shown that ‘life in urban areas is tough, poverty filled, and risky regardless of one’s migration history or legal status’ and attitudes held by urban populations and authorities, more commonly, of heightened xenophobia, discrimination, exacerbated negative perceptions and violence to “evictions, forced removals, and slum clearances” (Landau and Duponchel 2010, Yacobi 2010, Landau 2004:19). Such hostile attitudes would adversely impact the integration of refugee communities. Although the same pattern of insecurity has been detected in China prior to the 2008 Summer Olympics where stringent surveillance was conducted on the undocumented and where the urban refugees’ freedom of movement was limited only to selective settlements, leading to social segregation, gradual positive partnerships, although informal, with authorities in Yanjiao and Langfang had intensified protection and stability within refugee communities. Achieving this effective approach to protection was enabled by the UNHCR which engaged local authority structures towards pro-refugee treatment despite the political difficulties in implementing stability. Hebei’s Ministry of Public Security, through the participation of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials, is often convened for meetings with the UNHCR and the refugees living in the area. Since the adoption of this protection strategy, the refugees who moved to Yanjiao had experienced more sporadic security checks and reported higher levels of safety. The refugees recalled of the persecution and constant fear for their safety and that of their family members in their country of origin. One of the refugees revealed the torture inflicted on his

wife: “Once the police came and they beat my wife very badly and she damages spleen and admitted in the hospital. Here at least, we are not threatened; we don’t have to fear our persecutors.”<sup>34</sup> In China, with the issuance of identification certificates, refugees are protected within the scope of ‘*non-refoulement*’ and do not live in fear of threat of torture, insecurity and deportation. When compared to past instances of persecution in Pakistan and strict security checks and apprehensions of the undocumented in Beijing, the refugees in both places have described Hebei as protection-oriented, with more favorable foundations towards positive integration.

Understandably, protection from abuse and torture are crucial prerequisites for facilitated integration where refugees will seek rather than recoil from positive and committed relations with the host community.

### ***Recommendations***

Achieving durable solutions is dependent on the political will, diplomacy, and statesmanship of governments. Although bountiful economic conditions can ease the task of integration, political will controls the gateway.

Barry N. Stein, 1986

One vital recommendation to Chinese policy-makers in the context of refugee protection is to embrace refugees by viewing them as a potential asset to socio-economic and cultural spheres, incorporate them in the host community, with benefits both for the host and the refugee population. Integration, with emphasis on the developed sense of belonging to the host community will remain considerably limited if hardened policy measures restrict accessibility to economic and educational spheres and induce an idiosyncratic form of marginalization. The channels to full integration will remain clogged unless, as Kibreab

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Kashif’s father, April 6, 2011

(1996:170) puts it, “refugees are allowed to participate in the economic and social life of the host communities”. Furthermore, Jacobsen’s (2001:34) case study of the self-sufficient Guatemalan refugees confirmed that, by seeking refuge in Mexico, the latter have contributed immensely to economic spheres and placed the asylum provider highly on humanitarian and moral grounds in the midst on migration debates within the Latin American region. The advantages of refugee access to economic livelihoods will eventually result in less reliance on the welfare state, the UNHCR (financed by the State), related NGOs, human security whereby refugees will be given a sense of dignity and purpose and filling in human resources gaps in myriad sectors of China’s economy. Echoing Smyser(1982)’s words during his mandate as Deputy High Commissioner at UNHCR, “Our experience shows it is over the long run much cheaper, as well as better, to have the refugees be self-sufficient rather than dependent on relief”. In this respect, it is highly recommended that China, prior to administering asylum legislation policies, fully complies with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, alters its practice of integration without rights and aims at developing policies that will incorporate refugees within its society rather than merely providing temporary asylum and financial safety nets. Unless equal opportunity provisions under the 1951 Convention’s articles 17, 18 and 19, permitting refugees to legally access to ‘gainful employment’ and Article 22, the right to public education are established, recognized refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang admitted that they will remain constrained by limited integration.

## Conclusion/ Key Findings

Jacobsen (2001: 9) claims that refugees become de facto integrated when they are able to sustain livelihoods, have access to education, health, and residence, and are socially networked with the host community. Moreover, local integration will only work if it is acceptable to host governments, the local community and to refugee populations. Urban refugees in both Yanjiao and Langfang are not entitled to the economic guarantees and, although they are relatively conversant in the language and culture of the Chinese society, they cannot, unless they obtain legal residency or resettle in a third country which has implemented national refugee legislation, expect any progress in their situation. The Pakistani refugees at the two different stages of integration encounter similar legal constraints due to China's failure to avail sustainable integrative solutions. However, even without access to the labor market, the refugees in Yanjiao and Langfang are provided with sufficient funds from the People's Republic of China (See Chapter 2.1) which has exceeded the minimum financial assistance made available to refugees in other developing countries.

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Research conducted on urban refugee populations in Northern Africa has illustrated extreme stigmatization towards refugees, adding more hindrances to the efforts to facilitate the local integration of urban refugees (Grabska 2005, Pavanello, Elhawary and Pantuliano 2010, Landau 2004, Campbell 2006). Within the scope of Ager and Strang's 'safety and security' net, fieldwork in Yanjiao and Langfang has revealed that Pakistani refugee communities were protected. Furthermore, even if, to date, the UNHCR has been unable to

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<sup>35</sup> UNHCR Programme staff member's assessment

convince the host government of the possibility of local integration of urban refugees temporarily settled and in transition in the asylum country, are all considered for resettlement. Among the families interviewed one of them, Z's family, which consists of five members, has been accepted for resettlement in Canada and is expected to leave China in July 2011.

In a nutshell, this study has shed light on the coping integration strategies of Pakistani refugees on the nine principles by Ager and Strang (2008) in China's socio-political settings with a conclusive approach that, unless the China decide to legalize the status of urban refugees or provide a sustainable framework to remove restrictive policies, refugees, at an initial stage and at a later period of integration, will still remain marginalized, strictly "50-50 integrated", in hallmark principles in their first country of origin<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Excerpt from interview with Kashif's second brother.

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## **Appendix**

### ***Interview, focus group discussions and correspondence Transcripts***

All interview transcripts, focus group discussions and written responses and correspondence collected are included in this appendix. Informal conversations and interviews have not been transcribed due to the respondents' insistence on anonymity. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and protect the identity of the respondents. Full transcripts are presented where available. The writer bears the sole responsibility for any errors.

**1) Date: April 5, 2011**

**Respondent: Shaun Nemorin, Community Services Officer**

## United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**Place: Beijing**

J-Jennifer Yip

S: Shaun Nemorin

J: Do you think that the refugees in China are integrated in the society? How would you qualify their integration?

S: In China, because there's no refugee legislation, they have no such legal rights and they can't be adequately integrated within the society without such. There's no mechanism for them to be integrated within the society so although they are living there in relative peace and they have assistance from the UNHCR and have sufficient food to live but they, by no means, are integrated, they are essentially planted there and they tolerate it until they can get resettled.

J: Do you think they mingle with the society and if the society accepts them? How would you qualify this as your experience with the refugees?

S: Ah, I definitely think they mingle with the local population, there have many friends, you know, many people in Yanjiao are very open to them being there. So but yeah clearly Chinese ppl are very open with foreigners...overall, they are very friendly to the outsiders here I find, you know. Probably they would get the same... as I would get as an expatriate so...yeah. I've seen different groups. I've seen refugees come here and thrive. I've seen the people, some of the Iraqis, they can do ...they can form legal businesses... and do different things... someone gets married to local... yes they do stay within communities which certainly gives them less incentive to branch out because they can speak...those... becoming their friends and from within themselves there's no business opportunities because they are not forced to b/c anyway they know they are going to be assisted by UNHCR anyway so even if we are to implement vocational training or exercise, none of it is really sustainable because you know... they are not forced to...you know... they are not forced to go and fend for themselves and that's difficult where is the line between encouraging people to find such opportunities... and where does the help ends and I think we are a bit afraid to cross that boundary

J: Does the UNHCR provide other facilities besides the Vocational Training Center facility for children under 10 years old?

S: At the moment, we don't have language classes, because there are problems...like...we didn't view it...it wasn't very sustainable as well. A lot of them stay home...some of them... some of them look for different opportunities but a lot of them are staying home and you can imagine ... a lot of these are simply waiting but there is a lot of stress, frustration and because they cannot voice that frustration to the local community...so they can only voice the frustration at the UNHCR, which is quite difficult ...at the same time, we can completely understand because they are in a protracted refugee situation, we would like to find durable solutions but sometimes it takes time.

J: In terms of healthcare, their medical bills are refunded, since they don't speak the language, how do they manage to get medical care?

S: with difficulty...a lot of them have picked up some fairly decent Chinese and you know myself and Ms Wang we also, if they really need it, we can conduct interpretation for them, you know, because we always have our 24 hour phone line, so in case and emergency ...we can provide interpretation but with the health care that we provide, it follows the Chinese National health care scheme so refugees are provided with the

same facilities that the Chinese would provide to its own citizens. Anything else outside of that we don't cover. The refugee would receive 90% reimbursement from the office, the 10% is because we deem that refugees to take at least a share of the burden.

J: How would you describe the refugees' integrative strategies?

S: They are simply waiting to go elsewhere and that's important, cause if people are thinking that maybe we should spend this time to integrate in local society and then one day if that opportunity were to arise, then I go and resettle in a third country... they always think about until I become resettled... If you have that particular mindset it can create a lot of stress while you are here.

J: Are most of them resettled, how long do they have to wait?

S: It depends, it really does depend on resettlement countries, on average it would take about 3 years to get resettled, some might be longer, some might be 10, 7, 8, 9 years.

J: Which countries normally accept them for resettlement?

S: The US, Canada, various countries, France, Netherlands, Australia has taken several cases.

J: How would you compare the refugees in Yanjiao vs those in Langfang?

S: My experience is that we have various refugee groups in China, some are better than others. I find the, particularly the refugees in Yanjiao, is probably the most established because of the developed contacts, some of them speak really good Chinese. As such they have managed to search quality and cheap apts, which means that they can really live quite well from the allowance given to them. However, the purchasing power of refugees living in other refugees can be significantly lower particularly if they live in larger cities like Beijing or Guangzhou or Yiwu. Sometimes it's very expensive to source cheap acc, I find that probably those in Yanjiao probably lives the best but everyone views the Yanjiao community as some sort of 'refugee heaven'. In Yanjiao we have refugees from Pakistan and Iraq. In different cities like Wuhan we have predominantly those from Somalia, in other cities like Afghan.

J: How many refugees are there in China?

S: At the moment, I think that the last check is about 150 asylum-seekers and 102 recognized refugees all scattered in places in China. Main cities where they are found are Beijing, Gunagzhou, Langfang, Bazhou, Yiwu. The most concentrated Pakistani refugee population is in Hebei province, so we have 3 cities within the area. A lot of them all come to Beijing to apply for asylum here. We set up a community in Yanjiao as from 2008 and we have Armani community living there and at the same time we set up communities in Langfang, Guangzhou and various different cities. We have to be readily prepared to travel to these different cities and that's my role. That's what I do, travel to different places and assess needs and the situation is better as it once was. We haven't had any refolement.

## **2) Focus group discussion**

**Date: April 6, 2011**

**Respondents: Kashif, his father, his third brother (3 refugee repondents)**

**Place: Yanjiao**

J: Jennifer Yip

K: Kashif

K father: Kashif's father

K3: Kashif's third brother

J: What made you flee Pakistan? What happened in Pakistan?

K father: We can't celebrate our religious conscience... we can't say Assam in the mosque and they think if they will kill us they will get a home in heaven. That's why they want to kill us, just like animals... so we have no life there. We have no freedom there, we have no religious rights, nothing, nothing, even if someone knows they will look for a chance to kill us.

J: Was there any police force or authority that can help you?

K father: Even the police did not protect us, they also persecute us. They say that you go home, we can't register your complaint. Once the police came and they beat my wife very badly and she damaged spleen and admitted in the hospital. Here at least, we are not threatened, we don't have to fear our persecutors.

J: How did you escape from Pakistan?

K father: At the time of flee from Pakistan, I went to Islamabad to visa for any country, I met one agent I say that we need for visa for Hong Kong and any country of Europe, they say that they are both difficult for me to get visa for Europe but China is a country where I can get visa easily...if you want to go China..ok..give me your passport and particulars, then I can try my best. We were helpless to go anywhere...if he say we go Europe, I say ok, if he say I go India, ok, because I have to escape our lives, escape lives, he say China is the best because I can get visa for China easily, I say ok, I have to flee from Pakistan...anywhere...yeah... I really choose China willingly.

J: You came here with your family?

K father: I came here with my five friends. Two are in American, One is in Sweden, one is in Canada

J: Have you applied for resettlement?

K Father: First of all in 2005, American Immigration, I was interviewed by American Immigration but they reject me and after that, waiting, waiting and waiting, six seven years they send my case to Norway but it was also rejected.

K: Now we are waiting, for any country, if they have their quota...when Office ( UNHCR Office) will send our case for resettlement in third country...what happens to refugees in China they don't give status... legal status to refugees ... not in other country where you can work... they say we will not let stay in China, we will not let them work, we will not let them give permission for anything, we will just let them stay until as soon as they will get to another country

K father: even more that, even we can't go in the city

K: Since I am here, I've never been to any other city...except Beijing...what UNHCR says you don't have any papers...like if you have any friends, you can go to another city like Shanghai Guangzhou no... since long time we have to stay in one cage, we have to stay in Beijing because we don't have any papers for travelling and Chinese government is very strict in such things...we cannot do any kind of job...or any work, activities, we cannot. We just...we have to stay at home and we have to rely on the expenses we are getting from UNCHR. We can't do anything here...but in Europe you have a lot of rights...but it's nothing here in China

K Father: Our children cannot get education in schools

K: they also ask a visa, if you have a document, then they will give permission, of course every person here

since a long time...they don't even have a passport...all the persons' passports have been expired...we also ...all of us our passport have been expired a long time ago...so we don't have any single paper...or legal paper. It's the same for the colony.

J: Do you regularly interact with the local community?

K: Me and my brothers are playing Badminton for the last 2 years so it began with a game, then two, then...Through this game, we became very close to (the Chinese), so we are very good friends. Everyday we meet them, almost every week-end, they invite us for dinner... so we have "family terms" with them so we can speak Chinese, me and my brother...we can survive... we can't write but we can communicate in many other things..like medical, buying house( they mean renting an apartment) and things..even we have Chinese friends...so we daily meet with them...we talk to them in Chinese so we can speak Chinese and also Chinese persons here very very nice, we have very very nice persons...they are very good to us

K father: they are very cooperative and friendly persons

K: they always welcome us...where ever we go, even to shopkeeper to buy something, they will also welcome us because they love us... we are very bound here...we don't have opportunities for resettlement. This is a very big, big, big issue for all of us. Why we are here since a long time. All of us, we don't have any opportunity like UNHCR they don't get quota from Europe, if they get quota, they can easily push us there. But they always say sorry we can't do anything we cannot do anything for you...so what can we do for you here? But our office is very nice. The staff is very nice, very cooperative, we don't have any complaints from the office, they are doing and they have done a lot for us, for our lives, that's all.

K father: we are waiting for resettlement because our children...for their lives because due to their education. They are not getting education. We are not allowed to go to school or college, we don't have any legal documents...so that's why we can't get education. For healthcare, just imagine...just imagine me and my wife we are suffering with some diseases we can't get communicated with the doctors...we can't understand what diseases are with us...always they give us some chest (examination) but we didn't get really and our diseases in.creasing day by day...day by day

K3: You know my father used to teach. As a volunteer here, he was teaching our community kids here "nage" (Mandarin word for 'this')...and science like this

### **3) Date: April 6, 2011**

**Respondent: Kashif**

**Place: Yanjiao**

J: Do you have any problems of persecution based on religious grounds here?

K: We have no such problems here.

J: Tell me more about your interaction with the Chinese community in Yanjiao.

K: We used to meet with them (Chinese friends) everyday, daily with my two brothers. They everyday play...they meet them everyday. Some of them we invite them, me and my wife, they are very nice persons. We play Badminton with them. With this game, we came very close to each other.

J: Do you celebrate any local Chinese festival?

K: When they celebrate Chinese New Year, they celebrate with us, yes, we also visit their homes...we also

meet and sit with their family together but we don't eat *zhu rou* (pork). All of our friends know that we can't eat *zhu rou*. We invite them for our festival, they are very happy, they come. It's a two-way process interaction.

J: Do you mingle with the refugee community in Hebei?

K: Yes, recently we also have started playing cricket in San He, there's another small town only 40 minutes drive from here. A small number of asylum-seekers live there, we just started playing there, since last 2 months

J: Did you work in Pakistan?

K: In Pakistan, I graduated, was working in Nestle and with his father in business before I fled from Pakistan...when my father fled from Pakistan, I was working with Nestle  
I graduated from Arts not Science...

J: Do you have any sources of income besides UNHCR?

K: Only we are depending on them (UNHCR). We don't have any family any family members in other countries so many refugees they can call them they can ask some money but we don't have  
Sometimes we ask them (UNHCR Beijing), for our baby, baby clothes, such as diapers, whenever they have, they give me...

J: Do you or the refugee community encounter any difficulty in Yanjiao? If yes, which one(s)?

K: Sometimes, I take the refugees to the hospital because they cannot speak even basic Chinese but I can just speak. I can manage saying flu, fever, joint pains. I can explain to the doctor. We have friends in hospitals, nurses who speak English...and we can manage communicating our illnesses, we know the medical terms. They can speak a little English so we can explain to them in Chinese and English, mixed. So they can help us. Because they are our friends but they can understand. So like that, by the help of them, we can get help and we can also manage to speak some Chinese.

J: One more question, do you work in Yanjiao or Beijing? Are there any employment opportunities?

K: No, we don't work. We don't have the right to work. I don't work. We cannot work here. We can only wait for resettlement.

#### **4) Date: April 6, 2011**

**Respondent: Kashif's second brother**

**Place: Yanjiao**

J: Jennifer Yip

W: Kashif's second brother, Waqas

J: I noticed that your Chinese is very good. Where did you learn Mandarin?

W: I learn Chinese just from my brother, he taught me.

J: When and how did you come to China?

W: I came by myself, for us, first, my father came, then my older brother, then me, then my younger brother and my mother who are here since 2006. Before coming here, I didn't know anything. My mother that day: "Today you are going to your father", I said: "eh." I started crying I said I don't know anything. I cannot speak

English Chinese nothing. “I don’t have phone, anything, no money in my wallet what I will do.” My mother said, at that time I was 16, under 16 I think, I cried that day too much and I asked my mother: “what shall I do? I don’t know anybody.” She said: “no, just get on the plane and the plane will take you to Beijing and after the people will go to Beijing just go, go, go, just follow them”. I say: “maybe if they go in the toilet, I will also go in the toilet”, so ...but when the plane land, they, they went to the exit, the exit door...at that time my English was not good...at that time my English was not good...even I cannot English myself

J: So who taught you English when you came to China?

W: I learned English from my father. Before we used to have class, we used to have proper class, it was a kind of you can say a small school in our house, our community, from our community like 5 or 6 children, everyday we have class, every week we had exams, every month we have exam, every year we have final exams, after final exams we finish with those books and moved to other course and I was really it was cool after that some children they’ve been resettled. Now there are not so many children also he is sick, so he cannot have so much pressure, you know the teaching is a very big burden. Then we said ok you have some rest.

J: Then where did you learn such good Mandarin? Only from your brother?

W: Everyday we play Badminton, from them we learn Chinese. Everyday, like three or four hours something...recently we have played many tournaments also and we won. UNHCR they know about this and before I think two years before they gave us money to buy new shoes, new clothes, new rackets, we bought it and then we play competition and we won and in prize we also got some kind of shoes, some kind of clothes, some kind of rackets like this so we are surviving. My level of Chinese is pretty good. We can survive, we can buy something using ourselves, that’s ok.

J: How many Chinese friends do you have?

W: I have more than 20 friends. They are limited friends in Badminton, some of them are really close, we go to play billiards, snookers and staking and more friends are Badminton friends.

J: Did you attend school in Pakistan?

W: Before the accuser filed the case against our father, we used to go to school but, after filing that case, from that day, we stopped going to school, because we know we start moving our houses, we only like, whenever we change house, our parents they have one tutor for us and he comes and has a class private in our home, not in schools. That time I was too small, we moved a lot. I came in China and then I got a little bit a sense, what is my country, what is that country, I was so shocked at that time when I came here I came to know what the things are...before I was so young I didn’t have sense to think. We were used to ask them (our parents) everyday :’why? why our school? Why we cannot go to school?’ They said ‘no, just stay home, just stay home, we will arrange...

J: Do you work in Yanjiao?

W: No, We cannot work, we cannot do work. Even UNCHR before asked me to teach the kids English as well. I am teaching 4 kids Badminton for free. Before you know Chinese police is very very strict, they know this foreigner, they know...everyday they go there go there why, when we came in Yanjiao some police followed us and asked us for ID, then we called office and like when we came here. They (Other asylum-seekers) went to San He, there police also stopped them, then they called office and office told them that they are refugees and office said “we know them, we have allowed them to stay there”, then they can stay. In Beijing, one day

we packed our things and we don't know when police will arrest us and wait, wait and wait and we thought that they will come and they don't come. At least in Yanjiao we don't have that kind of problem

J: Do you know much about Chinese culture?

W: Culture I never interfere in my friends' personal lives...they love to drink, they love to have dinner...they love to go to KTV...they speak loud...they love to go to KTV.

J: How would you describe your stay in China?

W: Hmm...I've been here five years I have never been to the Great wall, it's one of the wonders of the world but I never went. I am in china see how bad I am. Five years I've been here, I never went. I really want to go. It's very expensive and also it's a security problem, in that area and security, high alert police. You know my dad has been here for eight years, he never went to the Great wall.

J: How do you feel when you know that your dad is still waiting for resettlement and has been waiting for so many years?

W: Eight years is just two words but imagine waiting eight years...I don't know, I don't want to stay here eight years. I am very worried about my parents' health, I want to establish myself in another country, learn their language I think maybe I will go for IT course. These years here are just wasted golden years where I could go learn vocational skills, IT.

J: How would you describe your integration in Yanjiao?

W: If we don't go to play, to Badminton, definitely you would think...Oh no man, no we cannot be like a Chinese, we have foreigners, but if we will join their activities like going to KTV (karaoke) and snooker, going to dinner, of course at some time you will feel you are familiar with Chinese but whenever you come home, no, but you can say, we are 50-50 integrated. Sometimes yes sometimes no.

##### **5) Date: April 6, 2011**

**Respondents: Kashif's mother**

**Place: Yanjiao**

J: Jennifer Yip

KM: Kashif's mother

J: I can see that you are very weak. What kind of health problems do you encounter in China?

KM: My sugar , after this operation, my body is no good, back pain, I ask my son my son please you massage my neck, you massage my hand, my bone...All time body very tired...not get up..God bless...God Bless me. My children, small, small, small coming to China...now big, big, big...so no education...so bad, no sleep, all night no sleep so sugar is high...this is my...Doctors don't understand... don't know what to do without my sons...

J: Do you speak some Mandarin?

KM: It is very difficult, no speak, no outside going, no language...all body very tired, very pain. My son is helping, all cooking, my husband, my son(s)... my heart and my eyes  
Sometime I feel my heart feeling I die, I die, I die...same condition...and you can't going outside...so trees, so same problem...breathing...

**6) Date: April 7, 2011**

**Respondent: Z and N, Z's sister**

**Place: Yanjiao**

J: Z, When did you arrive in China?

Z: I came here in 2005. We have to suffer a lot, lots of discrimination there, lots of unjustified things...there is a constitution and there is a law against us. Because it was not safe there anymore, I lived 25 years of my life, lots of difficulties, lots of discrimination and then there, there is no survival. No chance...the chances are you want to flee as quickly as possible. In Pakistan they people we deserve to be killed and that's why they will receive blessings. That's how I was here and I came here and my family came after 5 years, in 2009.

J: How did you adjust to your life in Yanjiao?

Z: Well, at the beginning it was bad, nothing to do, new things, new people and...Beijing was a big place and there was some NGOs, international community and they are doing different things, volunteer things and I was also doing something but when I moved here, it was hard. Here we have other Pakistani refugees. We are people from the same country, we have prayers together and this is how we are surviving, if anyone has any trouble, we are here for one another. Now we have nothing, nothing to do, and we are waiting for resettlement and according to the Chinese law we cannot work. Being a human we can want to go study, work, we want to do anything that other humans are allowed to do.

J: Besides the legal restrictions in China, do you like the community in Yanjiao?

Z Sister: Personally I find they (Chinese) are very friendly, once they get close to you, they really help you and and say that and yeah they are really good friendly people. I have a few Chinese friends and they are nice. We call each other.

Z: I have Chinese friends, almost every week I meet them. I avoid being asked what I do what I'm learning what is our business why my sisters are working parents are not working

J: Did you study and work when you were in Pakistan?

Z: Yes I did like 14 years studies and I was working in a computer company.

J: Since you are not allowed to work, how do you manage?

Z: We do have some issues with financial problems and we have help. But the financial difficulties we hardly survive with the money. This area was cheaper but this area is developing day by day and it's becoming more expensive.

J: Have you managed to learn Mandarin?

Z: We try we try (to learn Chinese) on our own but it's not still enough. Chinese language, when you do not have proper classes, you can't learn it. And other problem is when your mind is stressed and you cannot be concentrated as a normal person. So we are different, we are in very different situation, we have no jobs, no studies, nothing like normal people.

J: Do you work here?

Z: No, of course. We cannot work here. We are not allowed to work here.

J: Would you consider yourself integrated in the Chinese society?

Z: This is not integration. Integration means that when we get the proper rights then we are integrated. When you say talk to the people, learn the culture, we are, we try, we somehow 30, 50 percent we are integrated in the society.

**7) Date: April 11, 12, 2011**

**Respondents: Amir and his family (5 main respondents)**

**Place: Yanjiao**

J: Jennifer Yip

A: Amir

A sister: Amir's sister

A mother: Amir's mother

A father: Amir's father

A brother: Amir's brother

J: How would you qualify your experience in China?

A: I feel like I'm on vacation. I am on holidays here for four years.

J: Do you like Chinese people?

A Sister: Chinese people are very good, very friendly. I used to go to school in Beijing, I used to study Chinese. Now I don't go to school anymore. I don't know why. I want to learn English, I will go to USA later, I need to speak English.

J: What about you Amir?

A: I like Chinese people. I don't want to think like I'm a refugee.

J: How did you come to Pakistan?

A: I came to China from Pakistan by bus, then at Urumqi we took the train. The train took two days but the whole trip took eight days. We had to flee, my family and I we all fled. We loved the trip, so beautiful...the trip by bus was so beautiful, to Urumqi but the border is very mountainous. My parents were upset and sad but we, kids, enjoyed the trip a lot.

J: Do you have friends in Yanjiao?

A: Of course, a lot! By sports, people know me. I've become a famous guy, you know, I learned by myself. Before I wasn't play good, I came here and I play a lot. I wanted to play Badminton in 2008 but someone insulted me on the court because I didn't have a shuttle (shuttle cock) but from then on, I am another person today.

J: Did you get the chance to participate in any local tournament?

A: Many tournaments. I'm number one in the city. Thousands of people want to learn from me, they watch me play on Sundays. I also teach them English. I met Beijing coaches, I went to Beijing Sports University, they say they went to Pakistan, they played with Pakistani, they say 'you are number one in your country.'

J: Besides the game, do you spend time with Chinese people? Like, for instance, celebrate local festivals?

A: Many times we celebrate Chinese New year, it's kind of a busy day. Every day is a busy day.

J: What are the problems you encounter here?

A mother: We have problems with medical fees, only too high medical fees. We get 600 RMB every month, 400 RMB needs to be paid for his medical fees (pointing to his son).

J: Do you have communication problems?

A brother: No problems to communicate. Before my sister used to go to school in Beijing, she speaks very good Chinese. We don't have any problem to communicate.

J: How do you educate your children if they cannot go to school?

A father: There are two teachers from Yanjiao University who come to teach here. They come to our house, two days a week, one or two hours a week. Our problem is the high standard of living. The price is high and high.

A: Do you know any place where I can volunteer? I would like to volunteer for orphanages in Hebei.

J: Why would you want to do volunteer work?

A: I can improve my skills, it's like a job. I can bring my friends and also help people who need me. If I go, my friends will come with me. You know, I have many friends. So many friends, they will join me.

J: Would you all like to stay in China?

A mother: We would like to stay here, if they give us nationality, we would love to stay forever. We have a lot of friends but the kids have no future here, they stay at home, have nothing to do. You know, I like Chinese food. We all want to like somebody to come and teach us how to cook Chinese food.

A: Of course, if only I could get nationality. I would stay. I love China, China changed my life, I don't want to go to US. In China, everyone smiles and says 'nin hao', 'nin hao' ("hello" in Mandarin), I also say 'nin hao.' If I go to US, I will come back to China. China gave me everything, freedom. In Pakistan, we are afraid. In China, we have security, we are safe. Other refugees are not happy, complaining. I don't know why. I am very very happy here. In the US, I will have to work, no vacation. I am on holidays here for four years.

## **8) Date: April 7, 2011**

**Respondent: Manshad, his wife and family (2 main respondents)**

**Place: Langfang**

J: Jennifer Yip

M: Manshad

M wife: Manshad's wife

J: What happened to you in Pakistan?

M: In Pakistan, Mecca banned us from society, we are allowed to pray.

To believe God, same God, same prophet, same Coran and same prayers, they pray we pray...core issues are the same. We had to flee.

J: When did you arrive in Langfang?

M: We just arrived in Langfang, Hebei in one and a half month. I have two kids.

J: How did you learn Mandarin?

M: I learned Chinese language from the internet and with interaction with Muslim Chinese, we are very good friends, we can speak Chinese, we can rent house and we came to Langfang as we know that we can send our kids to school here...Our first concern is our children but if these kids don't have education at this time specifically it will be over. We want the kids to go to school.

J: Do you have friends in Langfang?

M: Our Muslim friends, Chinese Muslim friends, are very good, pay us regular visits, twice a week, teach the kids, have no doubt about the sincerity and kindness but education prospects are nil within Guangzhou. Good relations with most families. But we do not want to get close to them. We do not want them to know that we are Ahmadis, we don't want to be in danger.

J: Do you often take your children out to meet other Chinese children?

M Wife: Yes, but there is the construction, so they stay at home most of the time. My husband teaches them at home. My kids are still small. Our Muslim friends come to visit us.

UNHCR staff: You were a teacher back in Pakistan, would you consider teaching in Langfang and make some money?

M: Hmm... I have not thought about this. I will consider this. I need to find students. As you can see, we just arrived here in Langfang. I need to teach my kids at home.

UNHCR staff: What did the school say about the kids' enrollment in schools?

M: They said that they want our kids to come to school, for some exchange. Once a week.

UNHCR staff: Why once a week? Why not the whole week?

M: I don't know. We have to talk to them. Once a week is a start, we can talk to them later and see if they agree. Can someone from the office come and talk to the school?

UNHCR staff: Yes, I will ask Mr X. He will negotiate and see if the kids can go more often.

#### **9) Date: April 8, 2011**

**Respondent: Nasir, Nasir's wife, S, and family (2 main respondents)**

**Place: Langfang**

J: Jennifer Yip

N: Nasir

S : Nasir's wife, Shafiqah

J: When did you come to China?

N: We came to China, exactly two years now, we came in April 2009. We moved from hotel to Yanjiao, then hotel again, then Guangzhou, then finally we came to Langfang one and a half months ago... We moved to

Langfang for the education of our children. Our children cannot be set back too far in primary school

J: Do you like Langfang?

N: Well...

S: When he was in Guangzhou he loved his house, he wouldn't leave the house.

N: Yes when I was in Guangzhou I loved my house, my house is like no house, I don't have any other place than my house.

J: Do you have any problems in Langfang?

S: My main problem is communication in hospitals. In Guangzhou, we had many Muslim friends, many Chinese Muslim friends. In Guangzhou doctors can speak English and university students used to help us... here I don't know what the doctor was telling me about my baby. I don't know what she was saying.

Also, accommodation, the lady is asking one year in advance rent, we didn't have this problem in Guangzhou, we had many Muslim friends, many Chinese Muslim friends, they are very good persons. In Guangzhou doctors can speak English and university students used to help us. They used to help us twice every week. In terms of security Guangzhou was also very good.

N: My kids miss school very much. Here in Langfang, there is a Muslim lady, she cannot speak English but, here, people are more friendly. In Guangzhou, there are a lot of foreigners, so many foreigners, people are not so friendly. Here in Langfang we are foreigners. The people are more friendly, more friendly than the residents in Guangzhou. They love our kids.

S: See, we are renting this new place, we have nothing, just beds, no fridge, no utensils, we have to buy everything. Other Ahmadi friends have been helping us here. We like Mr Shaun from UNHCR, there is nobody like him in UNHCR. He is very good to us.

**10) Date: May 8 and May 20, 2011**

**Excerpt from electronic mail correspondence with Nasir**

**Respondent: Nasir**

May 8, 2011:

Dear Nasir and family,

How are you? How's your wife and the pregnancy?

I hope that everything is fine. Were the kids able to go to school even if it is for a few days per week? Let me know.

Jennifer

May 20, 2011:

Dear Jennifer,

I hope that you r fine,we r all fine here.My wife is also ok .the eighth month of pregnancy is going on but we are still facing financial problems. The childrens are not still able to go to school.the office didnt tell us anything about this issue... All the problems we face here, are due to the reason that we can't work here. Only financial problems, otherwise people are very nice and cooperative.

Sorry for late reply.

Nasir