

## ReSolve Multistakeholder Engagement Forum – 28 November – SSAR Support Platform

- Summary Note -

### Background

On 28 November, 2024, the SSAR Support Platform, in collaboration with the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform ([ADSP](#)), convened a first ReSolve Multistakeholder Engagement Forum in order to provide a platform for continued dialogue, stocktaking, and collaboration among stakeholders in the region committed to working towards the objectives of the [ReSolve Multistakeholder Pledge](#).

The first session of the Engagement Forum focused on the theme of “Afghan Women and Girls in Displacement”. In Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan displaced women and girls continue to face systematic barriers to accessing education, health, and reproductive services, and are at a high risk of gender-based violence, with limited access to safe spaces, legal support, and psychological care. Limited employment options and cultural expectations often prevent women from gaining economic independence in displacement, and participating in decision making, limiting their ability to advocate for their own needs. Addressing their needs requires a multifaceted response engaging a broad range of international, national, and local community-based stakeholders. Despite many barriers, NGOs and local organizations in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan strive to support displaced women through diverse programs focusing – for instance – on education, vocational training, and safe spaces.

### Highlights from the Engagement Forum

The Engagement Forum brought together Members of the Global Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform, organizations that have pledged under ReSolve, as well as selected operational partners in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. To frame the dialogue, the Forum began with a call to action from **Najeeba Wazefadost**, Founder and Chief Executive Director of the Asia Pacific Network of Refugees (APNOR), emphasizing the resilience and leadership of Afghan women and girls amidst displacement. Reflecting on her personal story, she highlighted the dual nature of their plight: enduring systemic barriers and unimaginable hardships while serving as educators, peacebuilders, and advocates within their communities. Equally, her intervention underscored the importance of moving beyond emergency aid to long-term, sustainable solutions that prioritize gender equity, dignity, and meaningful participation.

Subsequently, the Forum offered an opportunity for three national organizations who have either made GRF pledges or intend to formalize a pledge under ReSolve to provide insights into their work. Some key messages capturing the interventions of three partners are captured below:

#### Afghanistan: *Kabul Orthopedic Organization (KOO)*

- 1. Significant Challenges for Women and Girls with Disabilities:**  
Women and girls with disabilities in Afghanistan face systemic discrimination, social stigma, limited access to basic services, and heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV). These issues are exacerbated by cultural perceptions of disability as shameful, leading to neglect and exclusion, especially in rural areas.
- 2. Barriers to Education, Employment, and Healthcare:**  
Access to education is particularly difficult for girls with disabilities due to systemic barriers and

economic hardship. Healthcare services are sparse, particularly in rural areas, and inadequate maternal and child healthcare contributes to preventable disabilities. Employment opportunities are scarce, even for educated women with disabilities.

**3. Recommendations for Action:**

Focus on ensuring access to essential services, including GBV protection, healthcare, and education, for women and girls with disabilities, especially among displaced populations. Strengthen advocacy efforts, support civil society organizations, and address stigma to foster inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in humanitarian programming.

Iran: HAMI – Association for the Protection of Women and Girls

**1. Challenges for Afghan Refugees in Iran:**

Iran hosts millions of Afghan refugees, with significant challenges in education, mental health, and social integration due to limited resources, strained infrastructure, and cultural differences. The influx has also led to increased xenophobia and social tensions.

**2. Gaps in Education and Mental Health Support:**

Afghan students, including a high number of girls, face barriers in accessing quality education due to overcrowded schools, resource shortages, and differing curricula. Mental health issues among Afghan women and children, particularly those recently displaced, remain critically under addressed despite some local efforts.

**3. Recommendations for Action:**

Prioritize the development of social service centers, gender empowerment programs, and accessible education systems (including virtual education) for Afghan refugees. Additionally, strengthen dialogue on women’s rights with Afghan authorities and train Afghan teachers in Iran to support education in their home country.

Pakistan: INSPIRE

**1. Empowering Afghan Refugee Women and Girls in Pakistan:**

NGO’s initiatives focus on providing Afghan refugee women and girls with safe spaces, legal and mental health support, and access to education and vocational training. Programs such as urban cohesion hubs, DAFI scholarships, and digital skills training have helped foster empowerment and self-reliance.

**2. Challenges in Addressing Refugee Needs:**

Despite progress, significant gaps remain due to policy constraints, funding shortages, and societal resistance to recognizing refugee challenges, particularly for women and girls. Advocacy and trust-building within communities have been vital to increasing participation and access to services.

**3. Recommendations for Action:**

Foster regional collaboration, share best practices, and build a positive narrative around Afghan refugees to counter stigma and enhance support. Lobbying with governments and stakeholders is essential to highlight the ongoing needs of millions of refugees in Pakistan.