

# ECW FUNDED MULTI-YEAR RESILIENCE PROGRAMME

## PROMOTING REFUGEE EDUCATION



AWARENESS SESSION BEING CONDUCTED BY COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSON.

A remarkable transformation is underway in the Afghan refugee camp of Katwai, in the remote Loralai District of Balochistan. At its heart is the unwavering determination of Spozmai, a 20-year-old local social activist, who is proving that even neglected, deprived and conservative communities welcome change, when they realise their welfare and progress in that change.

Born in Katwai to Afghan refugee parents, Spozmai's early life was marked by lack of access to education. Her dreams of furthering education were shattered, with no middle school for girls in the camp. Instead of giving in to despair, Spozmai chose to channel her passion into a different direction – one that would ignite a spark of transformation in her community.

**"I may have been born a refugee, but that doesn't define me. It's our determination and the power of community that define us. Every girl in my village needs education for our collective welfare, and every woman deserves the knowledge and support to manage her periods with dignity. Together, we can transform our forgotten corner of the world into a place of hope and opportunity. Our heartfelt gratitude to Education Cannot Wait for supporting education of our children."**

**Spozmai, Afghan Refugee and Community Resource Person in Katwai Refugee Camp, Loralai District.**



WE ARE THANKFUL TO EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT (ECW) FOR ITS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORTING EDUCATION IN BALOCHISTAN.

The refugee community elders were discussing the selection of programme's Community Resource Persons (CRPs), with community mobilisation team of the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) financed Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), in the Katwai Camp. The team shared criteria for selection of CRPs, which included literacy and social activeness, and requested for nominations. Spozmai, was the first recommendation excitedly shared by them. "She always motivates all to educate their children, and is caring, social and helpful," they informed. They shared a few more names with the team.

The community mobilisation team and elders visited home of Spozmai, the next day, and were well-received. They elaborated MYRP educational support for refugee children, including enrollment of out-of-school children in the friendly Non-formal Education (NFE) Centre, established and supported by the programme in the government school of their locality, through community mobilisation and awareness raising. She welcomed and appreciated programme's support and expressed willingness to join as CRP for promoting education of their children and positive change. She was selected and joined as CRP. She actively participated in the training organised for CRPs, which included sessions on community mobilisation and community awareness raising on topics like importance of education, gender, and menstrual health and hygiene management (MHM).

Spozmai became a driving force behind the educational awareness and reforms in Katwai. She along with the programme team began mobilising the refugee community to enroll their children, by engaging in intensive enrollment and awareness campaign. She identified 195 out-of-school children, especially girls, during door-to-door visits and

community mobilisation sessions in the camp. She visited homes of identified out-of-school children, motivating their parents to admit them in the NFE Centre. Through her unwavering determination and commitment, 39 girls and a boy were enrolled in the NFE Centre, hence opening the doors of education or a brighter, inclusive present and future for them.

She believes that promoting menstrual health is paramount. Every young girl in her village should have the knowledge and resources needed to manage her periods properly. She actively educates girls and women in the camp about MHM, a topic considered taboo in the conservative Afghan society. Initially, community members were hesitant to discuss this subject. However, Spozmai's community mobilisation skills and conviction enabled her to effectively convey the importance of menstrual health, especially for girls, who should confidently attend classes during periods without taking day-offs, by applying the MHM guidelines and materials provided by the programme.

Spozmai is role model and source of inspiration, especially for the other women and girls in the community. Her success in initiating educational reforms and awareness raising in her community, despite daunting cultural barriers, is evidence of the power of grassroots level change through strategic community mobilisation, by dedicated persons like her.

MYRP will enroll 8,484 out-of-school Afghan refugee children, including 5,090 or 60% girls and 3,394 boys in the NFE Centres established in Afghan refugee camps in district Loralai. Thanks to ECW funding for improving access to inclusive and equitable quality education to vulnerable children by providing whole-of-child solutions, as envisioned by SDG-4 Quality Education for all.



## RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES NETWORK

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