

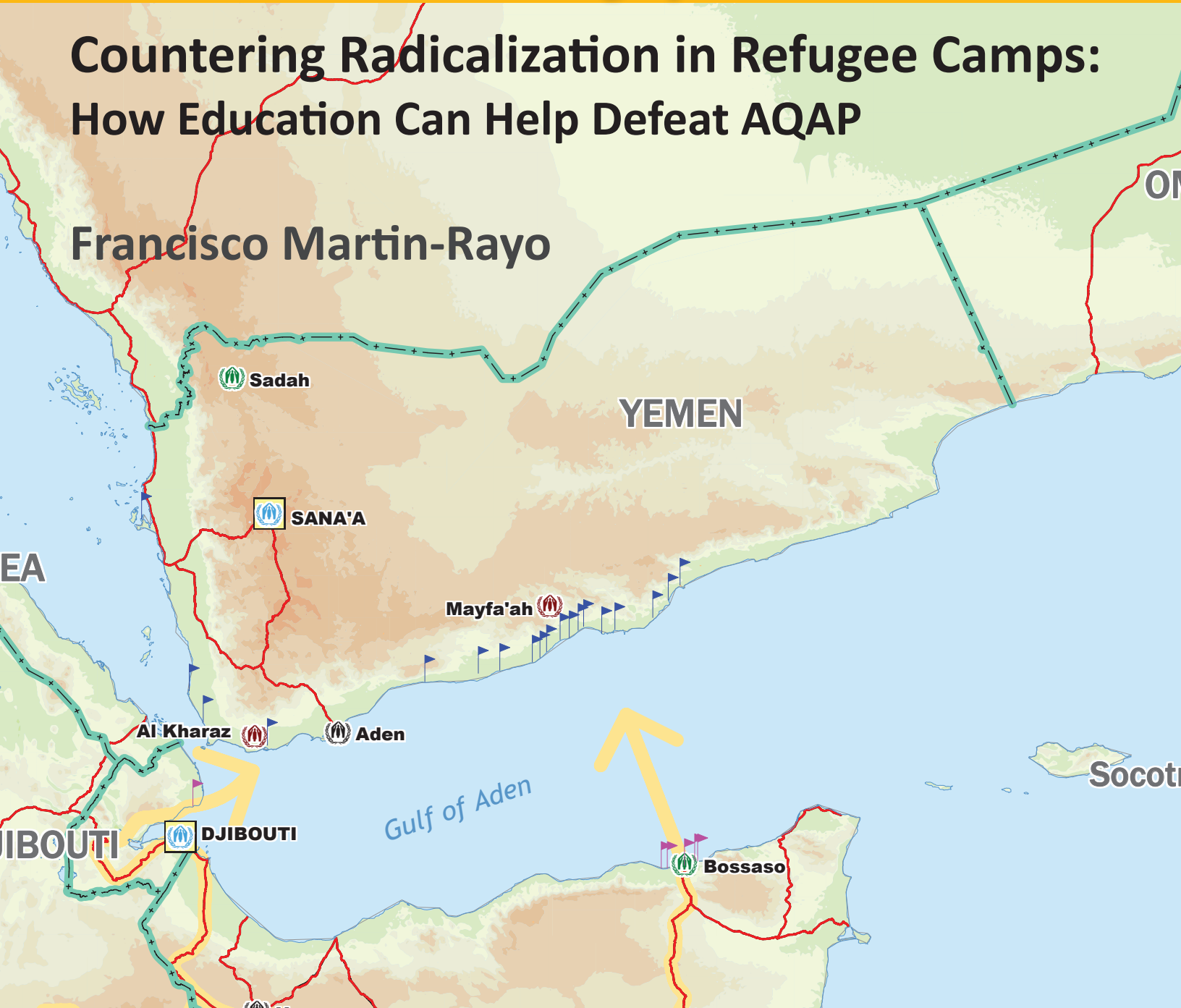
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Working Paper

Countering Radicalization in Refugee Camps: How Education Can Help Defeat AQAP

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SUMMARY POINTS

- This paper seeks to analyze some of the causes of radicalization and recruitment in refugee/IDP camps, and makes the argument that receiving a well-rounded education, even if it produces mediocre academic results, is the most effective method of counter-radicalization in crisis situations and reduces the space for extremist organizations to recruit and operate.
- Radicalization is especially relevant in crisis situations (and the camps that are created to house those displaced) because it can create space for terrorist networks to operate and stage attacks against governments or civilians. In addition, a highly radicalized refugee population can provide a cadre of ideal volunteers for a terrorist organization, as they are more vulnerable than traditional populations, typically come from a violent environment, and have fewer opportunities for personal advancement, thus making a terrorist organization more attractive.
- The existing literature on radicalization in crisis situations typically identifies three drivers of radicalization: the existence or pervasiveness of an Islamic education; the ability to find gainful employment; and the ability to have freedom of movement (encampment vs. open camp policies). This paper indicates that all three of these characteristics are secondary reasons for radicalization, and that **access to a well-rounded education is a powerful enough factor on its own to overcome these obstacles and significantly reduce radicalization and terrorist recruitment in crisis situations.**
- Access to a well-rounded education, even if of mediocre quality and even if the student is only able to attend for a few years, is the most important factor in reducing radicalization and terrorist recruitment from a population in a crisis situation, once their basic needs have been satisfied.

“Having grown up amid violence, the young boys I came to know in the camp were more familiar with Kalishnikovs and APC guns than they were with their alphabet.”

-Journalist Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy

“What would you like to be when you grow up? A suicide bomber.

No, no, imagine there is peace and security, what would you like to be? Ah, then a jihadist.

No, no, c’mon, there’s total peace and security, no war, what then? A good Muslim.”

-David Rohde interview with a young Pakistani in a Taliban camp

INTRODUCTION

Terrorist recruitment and radicalization in refugee and IDP (internally displaced people) camps is a subject that has historically been very difficult to research, both due to host government restrictions on the research subject and international organizations’ reticence to provide access or information on the matter. This reticence is not born out of an ignorance of the situation on the ground or a rejection of these issues over more pressing humanitarian needs, but instead is usually based on a fear of host government retaliation toward the refugee population and/or the expulsion of international organizations from the crisis zone, which would invariably harm the population that they are trying to help in the first place. Thus, most of the research in this field is qualitative in nature and is difficult to undertake in a systematic fashion, which makes it harder to support broad conclusions about the subject matter. This paper seeks to analyze some of the causes of radicalization and recruitment in refugee/IDP camps (referred to as “refugee camps” heretofore), and makes the argument that receiving a well-rounded education, even if it produces mediocre academic results, is the most effective method of counter-radicalization in crisis situations and reduces the space for extremist organizations to recruit and operate.

Educational programs are among the most important aspects of a child’s life in a refugee camp, as they provide hope and a semblance of normalcy to populations in a crisis situation. The existing literature on refugee education is riddled with examples of the value that displaced people place on education; e.g. refugee parents utilizing their own meager incomes to pay teacher salaries when the government or NGO is late or unable to make the payments (a phenomenon this author witnessed in the Akora camp in Pakistan). The importance of education at times forces parents to compromise their values in order to have their children educated, as is the case in Yemen. As Robert Worth reported in the *New York Times*¹, Abdulaziz al-Jifri explained that poor Yemenis, “would rather have (their) kids get an Al Qaeda education than be illiterate,” a common theme in rural areas where the government has been unable to provide educational infrastructure. This theme is also applicable to crisis situations, where parents are willing to sacrifice themselves not just economically, but also ideologically in order for their children to receive an education.

This paper is based on a project that entailed on-the-ground research and interviews with refugee and IDP students, camp elders, and local and full-time NGO/IGO workers in refugee and IDP camps in Yemen (Kharaz), Pakistan (the camps surrounding the city of Peshawar), and Kenya (Dadaab).

RADICALIZATION IN SOMALI REFUGEE CAMPS IN KHARAZ, YEMEN

This author utilizes Sarah Ladbury’s definition of radicalization, defined here as, “the social processes by which people are brought to condone, legitimize, support, or carry out violence for political or religious objectives².” Radicalization is especially relevant in crisis situations because it can create space for terrorist networks to operate and stage attacks against governments or civilians. In addition, a highly radicalized refugee population can provide a cadre of ideal volunteers for a terrorist organization, as they typically come from a violent environment and have fewer opportunities for personal advancement, thus making a terrorist organization more attractive.

The secondary school students in Kharaz, a relatively small refugee camp of less than 20,000 mostly Somali refugees, were the only students in the project to openly identify their desire to join al-Qaeda upon graduation. The secondary school in Kharaz has 226 refugee students (64 girls and 162 boys) and 300 Yemeni students. There are 19 teachers in total and the subjects taught include: Memorization of Koranic texts, Islamic Studies, Arabic, English, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, History, Philosophy, Social Studies, Geography, Economics, and Psychology. Although this litany of subjects sounds attractive, in reality most of the teachers are not qualified to teach their respective subjects, there are no desks for the children to use, the school has no electricity, and over 50% of refugee students drop out before graduation.

Upon being asked the question, “What would you like to be when you grow up?” one of the students declared that he would like to join al-Qaeda. Three other students in the classroom voiced their assent to this idea. When asked why, the students identified Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda as the most likely avenues for peace in Somalia and stated that they wanted to go back home and fight to help their country. Two other students stated that they wanted to become Imams when they were older in order to convert more people to Islam³. The remainder of the students stated that they wanted to become teachers, doctors, soccer players, reporters, and engineers (all commonly viewed as ideal professions by all of the refugee populations interviewed for this project). This was the only time during the project that any of the hundreds of students interviewed openly admitted a desire to join a terrorist organization, which arguably indicates a broader degree of radicalization in the camp, but also a broader acceptance of this phenomenon among Somali refugees in Kharaz, as the students did not fear any repercussion from making their views known to a stranger and a foreigner.

When informed that the Yemeni government planned to take over primary school education next year (the Yemeni government already controls secondary school education), which consisted of integrated refugee and Yemeni public schools, more than half of the male students reacted angrily, most backing the idea of a call to violence (“We will surround the school with guns!”) or an outright boycott of the primary school education system. Although these were secondary school students, who were already under the aegis of the Yemeni Ministry of Education, the general concern was that their younger peers would not be given the opportunity to receive a proper education under this new decision. When asked why they were so concerned that the primary school would be controlled by the Yemeni government, especially since they already attended a secondary school run by the government, they detailed the list of problems they faced as refugees in the existing educational infrastructure. All of the claims were verified by U.N. and Care International officials afterwards, who admitted their knowledge of these problems, but were generally reluctant to bring them up with the Yemeni government for fear of having their permit to operate in Yemen rescinded.

1. *Violence*: Teachers will regularly beat Somali students, but will refrain from beating a Yemeni student for fear of retribution from that student’s tribe or family. Yemeni students take advantage of this dichotomy to harass refugee students, knowing that any response from the refugee student will result in a beating for only one party, regardless of responsibility. Refugee students are also forced to bribe the teachers to reduce the likelihood of being arrested by the local police after a confrontation.
2. *Arbitrary Class Schedules*: Teachers are on average absent for 2/3 of the time that they are scheduled to be there, as students are supposed to have 6 periods a day but generally only have a teacher for two periods. In one incident, the secondary school was arbitrarily closed by the teachers for a few weeks after a Somali student hit a teacher back for beating her younger brother.
3. *Significant Corruption*: The level of corruption in the secondary school in Kharaz is stunning, less so because of the absolute amounts of money involved, but rather because of its pervasiveness. Refugee students are forced to pay the school administrator 1000 Yemeni riyals (~\$4.60) at the beginning of the school year to be allowed to attend the ostensibly free public school. If a student misses class, and does not want to fail the academic year based on these absences, he/she is sometimes forced to pay up to 3000 riyals (~\$14.00). Refugee students are forced to pay for their textbooks, which the Yemeni students receive for free. Refugee students are forced to bribe the teacher to allow them to take the end of year examination. Worst of all, the teacher will at times switch the

results of an excellent refugee student with a mediocre Yemeni one, thus ensuring that the refugee student cannot progress and allowing the local student to take all the credit for the success of the refugee.

4. *Language Barriers*: The vast majority of the classes, including English, are taught in Yemeni Arabic, which most refugees are unable to understand. Teachers also refuse to answer questions by refugee students, on the basis that it will slow down the class and hold back the local students.

This institutionalized discrimination against refugee students has created a population that is highly antagonistic toward the host government, which has further hindered their personal and professional development. As the students enumerated these obstacles, they described their sense of desperation, with multiple students agreeing that, “[They] have no future.” This was also the first time students, in any of the refugee camps, described a total sense of hopelessness. From the students’ perspective, why continue to attend a school where you are systematically denied the opportunity to learn based on your ethnic or national background? Why continue to attend school if you receive no recognition for your efforts (in the form of exam results, prizes, or graduation)?

The argument could be made that the radicalization of the refugee population in Kharaz was not due to students’ inability to access a well-rounded education (since some of them had in fact attended primary schools run by CARE International), but rather by the behavior of the local Yemeni teachers and students against them. One could even argue that in spite of receiving a primary school level of education, these students were nonetheless turning toward violence and extremist organizations as a way to escape. The real question then is whether these students would have turned toward al-Qaeda if they had been granted access to a secondary school education that recognized their efforts and was not dysfunctional.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

The existing literature⁴⁵⁶⁷ on radicalization in crisis situations typically identifies three drivers of radicalization: the existence or pervasiveness of an Islamic education; the ability to find gainful employment; and the ability to have freedom of movement (encampment vs. open camp policies). This paper indicates that all three of these characteristics are secondary reasons for radicalization, and that access to a well-rounded education is a powerful enough factor on its own to overcome these obstacles and significantly reduce radicalization and terrorist recruitment in crisis situations.

Islam was the predominant religion in all of the refugee camps visited during this research project, and was a prominent aspect of the populations’ social structure. Most

female students wore *hijabs* (headscarves), there were regular breaks so that students and teachers could pray, and there were scheduled prayer calls heard through camp loudspeakers. Most importantly, all of the curricula included lessons on Quranic memorization (in some instances taught by local imams and not by teachers) and Islamic studies. Those students who identified the Prophet Muhammad as the person they most admired, when asked why, always highlighted characteristics of compassion, mercy, and love (rather than focusing on more militant interpretations of the religion).

Of the students who professed a desire to become religious scholars or imams, a majority expressed their desire to increase dialogue between people, seeing their role as more of a mediator of conflict than in purely religious terms. A young boy in Dadaab mentioned he wanted to be, “like Shibrahim [attempting to refer to the Grand Mufti of Eritrea], because he was a famous imam that studies all religions and brought people together.” Another student in Dadaab mentioned he wanted to become “A Grand Ayatollah, because he is a great philosopher.” Given the students’ emphasis on the Prophet Muhammad’s characteristics of tolerance, compassion, and acceptance, and their view of imams as mediators and scholars, it seemed that undergoing moderate classes in Islamic studies was a successful counter to extremist or militant interpretations of Islam and made students more tolerant of different cultures and religions.

The second argument, that radicalization and terrorist recruitment is driven in part by poverty and the lack of employment opportunities, was not evident during the research project either. The counterargument is best presented by the case of Dadaab, where there is a population of approximately 30,000 idle youths, composed primarily of men between the ages of 18 and 30. There are few employment opportunities in Dadaab, and most of the U.N. sponsored work programs (including construction, carpentry, and stitching soccer balls) have not been successful in engaging the youth population, most of whom are forced to, or prefer to, remain idle during the day, sitting under the shadow of a tree or roaming the market places. Nevertheless, the head of U.N. vocational programs in Dadaab described al-Shabaab’s (a Somali terrorist organization linked to al-Qaeda) recruiting predicament, “Understand, though, that they are unable to recruit those children in school or those who have been here for a few years because they have developed a different mentality. Anyone who has received even a little education doesn’t go with them. So they target the older kids who arrived here post-2007, those who are too old to go to school here and were never able to attend school in Somalia. Al-Shabab goes to those kids sitting under a tree and bullies them, asking them what they are doing with their life, if they do not want to be real men and fight to provide for their families, rather than just wait for a U.N. handout.” By contrast, Yemen allows its refugees relative free passage to Aden and Sana’a, where they typically seek menial jobs in the domestic services sector or as beggars. The vast majority of Somali refugees does not stay within the confines of Kharaz, but

instead travels to urban areas to find employment. In spite of this open camp policy, my research showed a higher degree of radicalization among Somali youth in Kharaz than in Dadaab, as evidenced by reports of attacks against NGO vehicles and headquarters and from my interviews with the students.

Finally, the argument that encampment vs. open camp policies have an effect on radicalization does not hold true for the three countries visited. Pakistan has a very open policy toward its refugee population, where Afghans are not forced to live in camps (although many do), and instead have created slums parallel to their Pakistani counterparts around Peshawar. Wealthier Afghans typically live in independent apartments around the city. In Dadaab there is a relatively strict encampment policy, the camp is located over 400kms away from Nairobi, and although many Somali refugees do travel to Nairobi, they do so illegally and under the threat of arrest and persecution by the local authorities. In Kharaz, as previously stated, there is a relatively open camp policy for refugees to displace themselves to other areas inside Yemen to seek employment opportunities. The ability to leave the camp does not seem to have had an effect on refugees' favorable opinion of al-Qaeda in Yemen, while in Kenya, the inability for students to leave the camp does not seem to have had a positive effect on their perception of al-Shabaab. In Pakistan, students in the Akora camp seemed no more or less radicalized than their counterparts who lived in the slums of Peshawar, even though both populations complained about discrimination from the Pakistani authorities (although the level of discrimination was significantly lower than in Kharaz).

THE POWER OF A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION

Access to a well-rounded education, even if of mediocre quality and even if the student is only able to attend school for a few years, is the most important factor in reducing radicalization and terrorist recruitment from a population in a crisis situation, once its basic needs have been satisfied. The international community has largely succeeded at establishing protocols for feeding, clothing, and sheltering large numbers of displaced people, but continues to have serious difficulties in creating similarly successful protocols for education in refugee camps. NGOs and IGOs have different metrics to measure success, disagree on the relative importance of primary versus secondary education, and have differing opinions on the very content of the curriculum, among other divergent issues. Education is also usually the last and least well-funded of the basic services in crisis situations. Even Dadaab, the largest single refugee camp in the world with over 300,000 inhabitants and a large number of well-meaning and well funded NGOs and IGOs, some who have been operating there for over a decade, can only boast a 2.5% graduation rate from 1st grade through 12th (including dropouts and transfers along the way). However, even though the various educational programs and school systems enacted in Dadaab are

mediocre (measured by their low high school graduation rates), the programs have impacted the youth population in such a way as to make it far less likely that these students will join al-Shabaab.

After various interviews with teachers, local U.N. personnel, secondary school students, and “idle youth” in Dadaab, all groups independently verified that those who had received education did not leave the camp to fight for al-Shabaab. Those youths who had arrived post-2007 to the camp, and had never been formally educated given the collapse of the Somali educational system, were unable to adjust to their new surroundings, were too old to enter school (and there were not enough places in the accelerated literacy programs), and were more likely to be seduced by al-Shabaab’s extremist ideology and promises of glory as fighters in their militia. Of the hundreds of refugees interviewed, no one was able to identify former students who had left the camp to join al-Shabaab. Even if this figure is distorted due to a self-selection bias (this author was only able to speak with students who had been through the program or were friends with those who had been through the program, teachers and NGO workers who spoke English, the language in which the Kenyan curriculum is based), it is still remarkable that all four groups independently concluded that the primary distinction between youth who were radicalized and recruited, and those who were not, was their access to education. Whether the student had graduated, performed well, or had a job were not relevant factors in the analysis, as the overarching factor that distinguished those radicalized from those who weren’t was access to a well-rounded education.

During the interviews older students and idle youth were pressed on why they did not join al-Shabaab or go back and fight in Somalia. To summarize the various answers, they all highlighted that they did not agree with the organization’s ideology, and that they preferred to remain in the camp and not fight. These two points, although they simplify the emotions associated with the responses and the nuances between the various answers, are indicative of a population that views violence negatively and has become less prone to ideological brainwashing by extremist groups, whose rank and file members are typically uneducated. Principals and practitioners in the camps all agreed with this analysis of what a significant difference access to a well-rounded education makes, in terms of radicalization and recruitment.

More importantly, this author infers that al-Shabaab recognizes what a threat education poses to its stronghold in Somalia and its ability to continue to recruit fighters, given its more recent behavior. For example, in December 2009 the group orchestrated a catastrophic suicide bombing at a college graduation ceremony in Mogadishu, killing over two dozen people, including the Ministers of Education and Higher Education. Al-Shabaab had issued a statement in September 2009 warning schools about using textbooks pro-

vided by UNESCO that taught “un-Islamic” subjects. At the time the Minister of Education, Ahmed Abdullahi Waayeel, had dismissed their threat, endorsing the books’ content by saying, “The government and the education fraternity make sure that any books that are being used in our schools do not violate our religion and culture, so their (al-Shabaab’s) statement does not concern us.”⁸

In the IDP camp of Jalozai — filled mostly with displaced people from Bajaur, one of the most conservative and secluded provinces on the Afghan-Pakistan border — and the Afghan refugee camp of Akora, a remarkable transformation of the population was taking place. In both of their previous environments, neither population had educated female children (the older generation of Afghans in the camp had not even educated their boys outside of receiving basic classes on Quranic memorization, believing that any education outside of the Quran would make them “bad Muslims”). However, under the guidance of the government in Jalozai, and the valiant efforts of Rahmat Muhammad in Akora, the community at large had started to allow their daughters to attend school, even if only for a few years. This author’s conversations with the teachers and principals in these camps all highlighted their belief that the refugees’ displacement and sense of vulnerability in a new environment made them more likely to accept the idea that their children, including their daughters, receive a well-rounded education.

What is most heartening about this social transformation is that it usually continued once they returned home and typically affected the entire family, not just the female students. These families now had daughters that could read and write, benefits that made it less likely that individual families and, with enough momentum, whole communities would go back to their historical customs unless coerced. If and when the Taliban returned to their village, this community is far less likely to accept their demands that their daughters remain in the house, without a formal education. That would force the Taliban to either coerce the community, change its ideology to accommodate the locals’ new way of thinking, or leave to another locale where the ideology is more in line with that of the Taliban.

It is precisely these examples that highlight the opportunities inherently present in IDP and refugee camps, which at times bring together formerly rural populations that had lived far apart from each other (and from urban centers), into close quarters where international organizations are present. Being displaced is a tragedy for refugees, but it also presents an opportunity to fundamentally alter their behavior, making it more likely that they will reject an extremist ideology and internalize some of the values associated with a well-rounded education; for example, that of tolerance. I confirmed this view with other secondary school students, their teachers, and other Pakistani and U.N. personnel about the probability of students joining the Taliban, either Pakistani and Afghan, after

receiving a well-rounded education. Multiple sources concurred that the vast majority of Taliban recruits were woefully uneducated and usually illiterate. It seems that, as students acquire the ability to analyze and think more independently, all positive aspects of receiving a well-rounded education, and are exposed to more subjects and a world outside of their own, it becomes harder for them to blindly accept pronouncements that are illogical or harmful, and it becomes harder for extremist groups to brainwash these “corrupted” minds.

This research project suggests that an education program’s most essential characteristic in reducing radicalization in a refugee camp is not the quality of the education but simply its accessibility. A program’s dedication to tolerance and emphasis on a well-rounded curriculum and wide base of subjects are also key to its success.

POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

This analysis has the most repercussions for the United States, not only because it is the target of many of the world’s most dangerous terrorist groups, which recruit in these camps, but also because it is the largest donor of aid to refugees in the world. As the U.S. policy for aid to refugee camps currently stands, there is no separate allocation made to the education sector in these crisis situations. In fact, the U.S. outsources its donor aid entirely to third parties, allowing them to determine how to spend it.

Rather than make these general disbursements with relatively few preconditions, the State Department — which is currently responsible for distributing the close to \$2 billion in annual aid to refugees — should identify refugee populations at risk of being recruited by terrorist organizations or becoming radicalized (such as Kharaz, Dadaab and camps in the Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa region). The U.S. should then work more closely with the U.N. and other education providers to ensure that the children most at risk have access to a well-rounded education. The State Department, under the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, should create a new position responsible for allocating humanitarian aid to organizations that promote a well-rounded curriculum in at-risk refugee camps. Officials in charge of those programs should review them on the ground regularly, to ensure that a well-rounded curriculum is being followed and to reduce the possibility for corruption (as happened in Kharaz).

There are many problems associated with working with the U.N. and other educational NGOs, and there are multiple advocates that would encourage the U.S. to establish a separate program that is more highly targeted to its national security needs. One could point to Dadaab’s high dropout rate of 97.5%, the overcrowded classrooms, or the low teacher quality as good reasons for starting an independent program. However, as previously stated, even mediocre education programs make a significant difference in reducing

the likelihood of children becoming radicalized. A U.N. presence is less intrusive and less controversial than the presence of the U.S., making the organization's employees more welcome by the refugee communities. In addition, in most of these crisis situations the U.N. and other NGOs are already present and have the trust and existing network to effect changes that a new organization could not.

From its side, the U.S. should continue to emphasize the importance of female education and fund successful programs that encourage girls to attend and excel in school. Female education is one of the most significant differences between Western ideals and an extremist ideology, and helps pit refugee populations against groups like the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Once a population has seen the benefits of having educated females in its community, it usually carries these values back home upon its return, reducing support, and space, for terrorist networks that seek to force women to remain ignorant. For example, Ladbury (2009) makes the point that women play a moderating role against extremism in Afghanistan.⁹

Finally, the U.S. should increase its funding of accelerated literacy programs, so that older refugees who had previously been unable to attend school can be given the opportunity to become educated, thus cutting off a valuable source of fighters for al-Shabaab in Dadaab, and other terrorist organizations infiltrating at-risk populations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the most effective method for reducing radicalization and making it more difficult for terrorist organizations to recruit is increasing access to well-rounded education programs. These programs have a lasting effect not only on the refugee population during their displacement, but also upon their return home, where their new ideas reduce the space for extremist actors to operate and make it more difficult for them to spread their ideology. Crisis situations should be seen as an opportunity to educate a population that, prior to their displacement, was in most cases disparate and had little to no access to education. Even a few years of education can make a tremendous difference, both in changing the individual student's outlook and the community as a whole, as we saw in the Jalozai and Akora cases with female education reforms. The United States, as the main target of international terrorism and largest donor of refugee aid, should take the lead in increasing access to education in refugee and IDP populations that are at risk of being radicalized and recruited by terrorist groups.

BIOGRAPHY

Francisco Martin-Rayó is the author of the upcoming book "Winning the Minds: Travels through terrorist recruiting grounds in Yemen, Pakistan and the Somali border." He graduated with a Master's from the Harvard Kennedy School in 2011, where he was also a Belfer Fellow, and is currently a Presidential Management Fellow. His research revolves around counter-radicalization, negotiation, and public diplomacy programs in the Middle East. He attended the University of Pennsylvania as an undergraduate, where he obtained a B.Sc. in Economics and a B.A. in International Relations, both with honors. He can be reached at francisco_martin-rayo@hks11.harvard.edu.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Worth, Robert, “Is Yemen the Next Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*: July 6, 2010.
- 2 Ladbury, Sarah, “Why do men join the Taliban and Hizb-i Islami? How much do local communities support them?” *Independent Report for the Department of International Development*: August 14, 2009.
- 3 This statement is not particularly surprising or alarming, and is included only to give a complete breakdown of the students’ responses.
- 4 This author here refers to Ladbury 2009, who mentions that, “Underemployed young men with frustrated aspirations and a limited stake in society are particularly susceptible to radicalization,” as well as that, “Madrassas provide a limited education which leaves their students particularly vulnerable to extremist narratives.”
- 5 The Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, in its June 2010 paper, “Research, Radicalization and Religious Extremism: The Work of PIPS in Pakistan,” states that, “among lower classes, mainly in poorly governed areas includes tribal and its adjoined areas... the drivers to radicalization and terrorism are poverty, inequality and loose administrative structures, and [the] motives are religious.”
- 6 Daniel Benjamin, the head of the U.S. Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the State Department, stated in January 4, 2010, that, “There is no denying that when children have no hope for an education, when young people have no hope for a job and feel disconnected from the modern world, when governments fail to provide for the basic needs of their people, when people despair and are aggrieved, they become more susceptible to extremist ideologies.” Although he does make a reference to the importance to education, the State Department’s official position is that education, in and of itself, is not enough to prevent radicalization.
- 7 A cursory search of scholarly articles reveals dozens of papers published that argue that there exist a wide range of factors that drive radicalization, many which disagree with each other, but most of which touch on the three broad themes in this paper: poverty (or unemployment); the inability of an individual to feel “fulfilled” (a combination of unemployment and restriction of movement); and the influence of an Islamic education.
- 8 “Minister Rejects al-Shabaab’s Education Warning,” IRIN, September 22, 2009.
- 9 Ladbury 2009

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