

Afghan Association Paiwand

Introduction

Afghan Association Paiwand is based in Barnet, North London. It was set up in 2002 by a group of eight friends, who wanted to support their children and other Afghan children to maintain their home language and cultural identity in the UK.

Farid Mall, who is still Director today, remembers the early days fondly: 'We decided to start an organisation because at the time most of us could not speak English, and as our children were coming home from school speaking English more and more, we realised that it was becoming increasingly difficult for us to communicate with them. Our children were starting to find it difficult to communicate with their relatives back in Afghanistan and we worried that they were starting to lose their cultural identity. Gangs and anti-social behaviour were also real problems in Harrow and we were also worried that our children might become involved. When we attended our first meeting with Barnet Voluntary Services to get some advice from them, they were telling us what to do and most of us could not understand a word!'

Despite these initial language challenges, 'Paiwand' meaning unity in Dari (an official language in Afghanistan) was formed and aims to unite the Afghan refugee community and improve the quality of their lives in the UK. In 2009 it started to open its services to other minority ethnic groups. So, in 2010, the organisation changed its constitution and widened its aims to work 'for the benefit of Afghans, refugees and migrants in the European Union'. It is now generally referred to as Paiwand. It supports a total of 3,000 children, young people and adults with a variety of support needs.

In addition to what is now a well-established supplementary school, it provides advocacy services to a caseload of around 2,000 individuals per year, supporting them with welfare, housing, employment and immigration needs. It also delivers workshops in mental health and well-being, English classes for adults, supported accommodation for unaccompanied minors and refugee youths, half term and summer activities for children and young people, and a mentoring programme for vulnerable young Afghans at risk of social exclusion. It also has a community library of over 2,000 books in both Dari and Pashto, the two official languages of Afghanistan.

Paiwand has an annual turnover of approximately £430,000 and is a registered charity.

How the Supplementary Schools' programme began

The first supplementary school session took place in 2002 at London Academy, a secondary school in Barnet which a large number of Afghan children attended. When Paiwand secured a £5,000 grant from Barnet Council to run mother tongue language classes, Farid approached the Headteacher of London Adademy asking him to provide classroom space. He was receptive to the idea of a Saturday School being based there, particularly as Paiwand could pay for room hire and this would provide additional funds for the mainstream school.

The first programme consisted of two classes, attended by 35 Afghan children aged 6–14 years. Five teachers (with teaching qualifications from Afghanistan) taught Dari and Pashto from 10am to 1pm on Saturdays. Using their links in the community, all eight founder members consulted a large number of people about which services were needed. Paiwand

then expanded its programme to include Islamic studies, maths and science. Classes took place on a weekly basis and families paid £2 per month for each child.

In 2003, Paiwand managed to secure a further £15,000, including a £10,000 grant from Trust for London, and £5,000 from Barnet Council. This enabled Paiwand to continue running the programme for a year, but then the funds ran out. By this point, Paiwand had developed a strong relationship with London Academy and Farid was able to negotiate a different agreement with the school. The academy would provide the venue free of charge in exchange for one of Paiwand's teachers acting as a teaching assistant in the mainstream school. London Academy was finding it difficult to engage with Afghan families and needed Paiwand's help to communicate with them. Paiwand also increased the fees for supplementary school classes to £5 per month after consultation with students' families.

Unfortunately, Paiwand's partnership with London Academy did not continue, but Farid feels that some important lessons were learned. "We didn't have a formal agreement with the school - it was more of a verbal agreement with the Head with whom I had a great relationship," he explains, "However when he left, the new contract put in front of us required us to pay £43,000 for room hire! When I challenged this, I realised that not many people at the school knew what we were doing or saw the overall benefit to them. Having the relationship with just one person left the programme vulnerable and we just couldn't continue there..."

Getting the mainstream schools on board

Getting the second mainstream school on board was relatively straightforward. Farid was a trustee of Barnet Refugee Service, which was using space at Whitefield (Secondary) School for its office. As part of an initiative by the Department of Education and Skills in 2003, Whitefield School had been granted extended schools' status, and funding to provide a range of services for adults and children in partnership with local community organisations. Farid did some research into the school and found that 75% of its students were from BME backgrounds and that around 1 in 7 was from Afghanistan.

Farid approached the Deputy Headteacher at the end of 2004 and proposed a package of activities to take place at the school consisting of classes in maths and science in addition to cultural activities, language and Islamic studies' classes. As the school had over 100 Afghan students, Whitefield School was keen to work with Paiwand. They also discussed how Paiwand's teachers could support Whitefield to engage with the Afghan community, after which the Deputy Headteacher drafted a formal partnership agreement.

The programme started in January 2005. Whitefield School agreed to provide access to a minimum of ten classrooms, the drama hall, cricket nets, gym and dining areas every Saturday during term-time and use of the main hall three times a year for celebratory events – free of charge. In return, Paiwand made available a community teacher based with Whitefield's English as an Additional Language (EAL) department for two days a week to provide 'bilingual support', including:

- 1-2-1 support for newly arrived children and classroom assistance when needed
- Telephone calls to parents relating to the education of their children including parents' evenings and any contact related to behaviour issues
- Translations of information into Dari and Pashto to be sent to families

An extended schools' link person, appointed by Whitefield school worked with Paiwand and other community organisations on Saturdays. She had decision-making power so was able to resolve any issues between Paiwand and the mainstream school. These issues were relatively minor, such as classrooms not being left in the same layout as they were found. In contrast to the arrangement with the first mainstream school, this link person enabled a much more supportive relationship to develop, in which partners were valued by the school, issues were resolved quickly, and teachers understood how the partner organisations added value to their own work.

Paiwand was introduced to another mainstream school by Joy Collins, who was Head of Harrow Council's Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS). She knew of Paiwand because of its strong presence and reputation in both Barnet and Harrow. In 2009, she commissioned Paiwand to work in partnership with the EMAS to provide study support for children at Whitefriars Primary School, which had a significant number of underachieving students. She also secured further funding from John Lyon's Charity to expand this work and set up what was called Harrow Weekend School. Local primary schools with high levels of underachievement referred students who were most in need of support.

In total, 100 children from eight primary schools were supported by Harrow Weekend School, which was still based at Whitefriars Primary School. English and maths classes were delivered by UK qualified teachers, employed by Paiwand. Each primary school provided a staff member to link with the Weekend School. An agreed process for exchanging information between the partners enabled teachers to co-ordinate the curriculum and type of support provided for each child. The EMAS ensured that the progress of children attending Harrow Weekend School was closely monitored and this provided evidence that the School was having a significant impact on students' levels of educational attainment in mainstream school. As a result of its success the Headteacher of Stag Lane primary school contacted the EMAS with a request to set up a similar model.

Development of the cluster model

Meanwhile, the partnership with Whitefield School had continued and 140 children and young people were benefiting from the Saturday programme by 2010. However, Paiwand realised that only a few of Whitefield's Afghan students (out of a total of 105) were attending the Saturday school. They decided to adopt the referral system that had been so successful for the Harrow Weekend School, and put in place the same high quality of data exchange and communication. They also decided to open the classes to Whitefield's feeder primary schools so that support would be longer term and cover the transition period from primary to secondary school.

This new level of partnership led to Paiwand's teachers having access to more of Whitefield School's resources including: the interactive whiteboard, learning resources and the computer network. In addition, community teachers from Paiwand were linked with teachers from the mainstream school to share experiences and practice, and they were invited to participate in the school's professional development programme.

At the end of 2011, Paiwand and Whitefield School agreed to work on a partnership bid to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. As funding was about to end for Harrow Weekend School, Joy Collins suggested they expand the bid to include all three groups of supplementary and mainstream schools working together. They started to refer to these groups of schools as 'clusters', as they were geographically close together.

The programme

In November 2012, Paiwand successfully secured a three-year grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to develop this partnership work. It now coordinates three clusters of schools in the Harrow and Barnet. Each cluster consists of either a primary or secondary school hosting classes on Saturdays for students from at least five other mainstream schools. They each refer (and pay for) up to 20 of their most underachieving students to attend every week. In return for the venue and caretaking costs being provided free of charge, the host school also refers up to 30 of its own students onto the programme.

Two of the clusters also accept students that are directly referred by parents, who pay a fee for tuition. These children are mainly from Afghan backgrounds, and some travel from other parts of London. Their numbers have steadily grown due to increasing awareness of Paiwand's services within the community.

Today Paiwand's three supplementary schools operate from 10am–3pm on Saturdays for 33 weeks in the year. Classes are offered in English, maths, Dari, Pashto, music and drama and support 500 children and young people aged 6–16 years. Approximately 300 students

are referred by partner schools and the remaining 200 young people are referred by parents. Approximately 40% of the students are from Afghan backgrounds, while the rest of the students are mainly from Indian, African-Caribbean, Somali and Eastern European backgrounds.

As part of this partnership work, Paiwand's community teachers work closely with mainstream school teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of UK schools' approaches to classroom management, lesson preparation and assessing children's progress. In return, the community teacher provides ongoing support to the school by communicating with parents, providing interpreting (where possible) during parents' evenings and meetings to discuss any behavioural issues, and supporting students that have newly arrived to the country. Mainstream teachers develop their skills in supporting students that are new to the country and communicating with parents through learning from community teachers.

By sharing data about students' progress in English and maths, Paiwand and their partner mainstream schools have evidence that each of the supplementary schools continues to have a positive impact on confidence, wellbeing and levels of educational attainment. Paiwand has received a 'Special Distinction Award' from the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education and is in the process of gaining the QISS (Quality in Study Support) Quality Mark.

Finances

The total cost of running the Supplementary Schools' Programme is approximately £115,000 per year to support 500 students on a weekly basis. Just over 85% of expenditure is staffing costs and volunteer expenses. This includes 3 part-time project managers who each coordinate one cluster of supplementary and mainstream schools. In addition 24 English/maths teachers, 12 community language teachers and 35–40 other volunteers support the supplementary school programme.

Just over half of these costs are met by a three-year grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. £45,000 per year is earned through charges to the 16 partner primary schools; fourteen schools pay £3,000 each to refer 20 of their students onto the programme and two schools pay £1,500 to refer ten of their students.

Approximately £20,000 per year is from fees charged to the families of self-referred students. They pay £25 per month for each child (£20 per month for the third and any subsequent children).

The three host mainstream schools provide the venues and caretaking services free of charge which presents an in-kind benefit to the value of £65,000 per year. In return, they are able to refer up to 30 of their own students to participate in the programme.

Financial year	Income	Expenditure
2010-11	£98,220	£99,590
2011-12	£148,925	£137,040
2012-13	£123,096	£113,272

*Note: these figures are for the Supplementary Schools' Programme only. 2012-2013 income and expenditure decreased due to a reduction in funding from Harrow Council.

What next for Paiwand?

Farid feels that the partnership programme has been most successful when mainstream schools have worked with Paiwand as equal partners and share an understanding and appreciation of the value of supplementary education. A few primary schools have set up their own supplementary schools, and asked Paiwand to provide teachers only. Another primary school approached Paiwand to set up and run supplementary education classes funded by the mainstream school.

Funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation is due to end in 2015, and Paiwand's aspiration for the project is that most of the 16 participant schools will come together and fully fund the programme. For this to happen, they will each need to increase their contributions, from £3,000 to £9,000 per year per school.

If that can be achieved, Farid feels that Paiwand will have achieved its own aims and ambitions: to embed a strong model of partnership between schools and between the education and community sectors.