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Teacher Grateful for Textbooks

A teacher describes the impact of Dari textbooks on her students

Ali and Hussain Saberi arrived in England in August 2005 and started at John Bunyan Upper School in September. When Trish Wrightson, an English teacher at the school, first met them, they both spoke very little English. Through a translator, Wrightson



Photo: John Bunyan Upper School/Trish Wrightson

Ali and Hussain Saberi, with Dari textbooks published by USAID.

“Ali, Hussain, and I thank you for sending us the Dari textbooks. These boys deserve a chance to catch up on the basics from primary school. It is essential for their self esteem and their academic success,” said schoolteacher Trish Wrightson, who is teaching the boys English in the United Kingdom.

learned that neither boy had any formal education. She realized that they needed to learn not just English, but other subjects like math and science as well. And, they needed to learn quickly — at age 16, Ali was in his last year of high school.

Before coming to England, the boys had lived in Kabul where their father was a shopkeeper. When the Taliban captured Kabul, their father was arrested and in Ali’s words, “not allowed to live.” His two older brothers disappeared, forced by the Taliban into a training camp, so their mother took her two remaining sons across the border to Pakistan. She found work in a weaving factory. Although the boys had been promised an education, they were forced to weave carpets. Ali started weaving when he was barely six — Hussain soon followed. Later their mother passed away, leaving the boys to support themselves with their weaving. In 2005, a family friend found Ali and Hussain. He explained that one of their brothers was alive in England and had applied for guardianship. The friend helped them flee to England, where the brothers reunited.

In March 2006, Hussain brought a math book to school that was printed by USAID in his native Dari language. Trish Wrightson had been searching for books in Dari to help build the boys’ knowledge in math, science, and biology, but had no luck. She ran an Internet search and found that USAID produced Dari textbooks in several subjects. In response to her request, USAID sent her more textbooks in science, geography, and math. Since then, Wrightson has been busy helping the brothers learn English while they catch up on primary school basics in Dari.

USAID has printed and distributed 48.5 million textbooks in Dari and Pashtu for grades 1-12 and is reprinting 11 million school books.

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U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
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