

AFGHANISTAN

PRIORITY AREAS OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: A SYNOPSIS

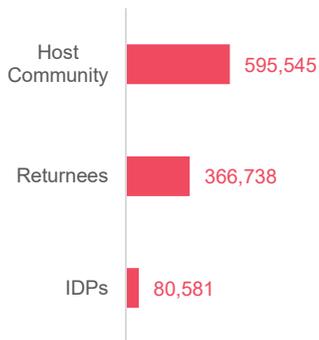
January 2020

Priority areas of return and reintegration have been established in line with the Government of Afghanistan's priorities in locations where UNHCR's short- to medium-term community-based protection (CBP) projects can be linked to longer-term development programmes of the Government and other partners.

TOTAL PERSONS OF CONCERN

1,042,864

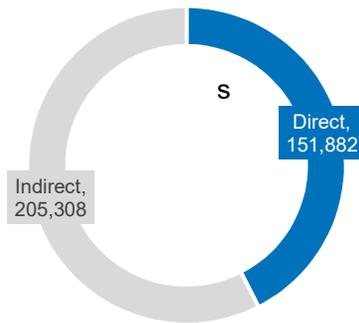
People living in PARRs in 2019



TOTAL BENEFICIARIES REACHED

357,190

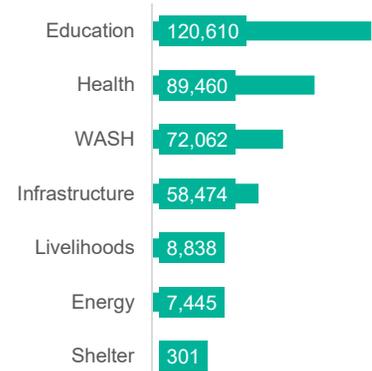
People directly and indirectly assisted in PARRs in 2019



SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

7

People reached by each sector in 2019

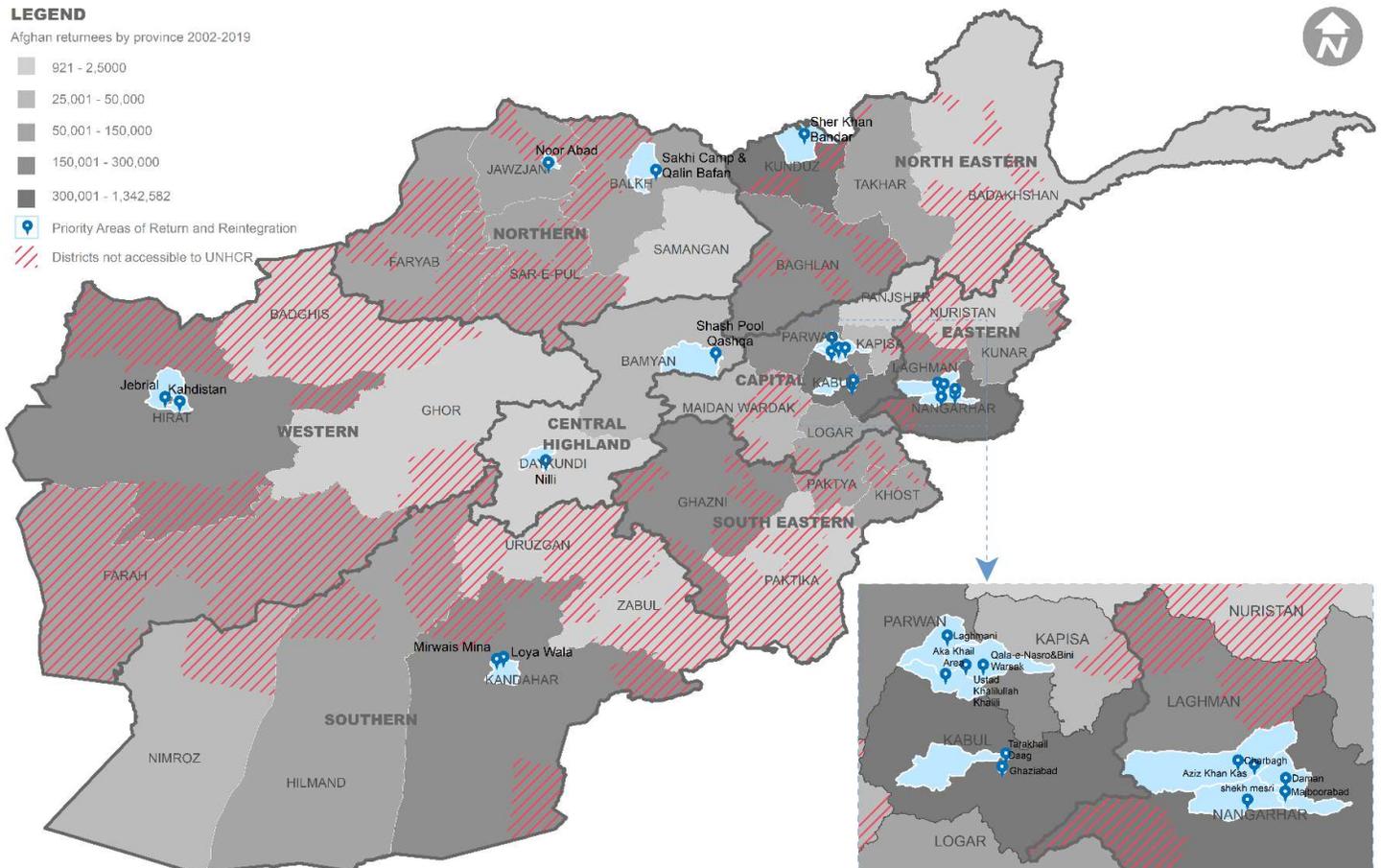


20 PRIORITY AREAS OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

LEGEND

Afghan returnees by province 2002-2019

- 921 - 2,5000
- 25,001 - 50,000
- 50,001 - 150,000
- 150,001 - 300,000
- 300,001 - 1,342,582
- Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration
- Districts not accessible to UNHCR



OVERVIEW

Over the last four decades, millions of Afghans have been driven out of their homes and their country by conflict, violence and poverty. The vast majority of them are in the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Iran, which continue to host over 1.4 million and 950,000 registered Afghan refugees respectively. Both countries also host millions of Afghans who have left in search of better economic opportunities or access to services.

Over 5.2 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002. While voluntary repatriation has decreased in recent years due to deteriorating security situation and persisting lack of absorption capacity, Afghan refugees continue to return. In addition, OCHA estimates that more than 4 million people who have been displaced since 2012 remain displaced from their homes. This situation is reflected in the humanitarian community's decision to move to a needs- rather than status-based approach to assistance to IDPs.

Returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are often living side by side with local communities that require support and significant investment is needed to ensure that the needs of communities as a whole are met.

Criteria for selecting PARR locations

National priorities: alignment with National Policy Framework for Returnees and IDPs, the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, the Citizens' Charter, geographical and ethnic balance

Access: security environment allows UNHCR and partners to be present

Sustainability: key elements for reintegration present (land, basic services, proximity to population centres and markets, livelihoods)

Cohesion: benefits reach all people in area, focusing on ensuring the long-term sustainable reintegration of all returnees within their communities.

Within the framework of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR continues to facilitate a protection and solutions dialogue between the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. As part of this process, the Government of Afghanistan has committed to renewed efforts to advance sustainable reintegration of displaced Afghans, in alignment with the national development plans. To support these commitments, in 2018, the Government of Afghanistan formally endorsed the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which together support multi-stakeholder efforts to address the root causes of displacement. The four key objectives of the GCR are: easing

pressure on host countries and host communities, enhancing self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions for refugees, and supporting conditions in countries of origin to facilitate return in safety and dignity.

PRIORITY AREAS OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

While the Government of Afghanistan, UNHCR and other partners have in the past implemented projects in over 100 areas of return and displacement across the country, there is a recognition that more needs to be done to forge stronger synergies between humanitarian action and development programming. In line with the SSAR, and more recently the GCR, 15 priority areas for return and reintegration (PARRs) were identified in 2019 through UNHCR's protection monitoring and information management activities and endorsed by the Government of Afghanistan.

In 2020, 5 additional new areas have been selected. The PARRs are selected based on the priorities of the government, including the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and the Citizens' Charter National Priority Programme, the high number of returnees they have absorbed, and a range of protection needs evident in the communities. They are also chosen for their suitability to collective efforts by a wide range of humanitarian and development actors in Afghanistan.

In the priority areas, in close consultation and coordination with the Government of Afghanistan, UNHCR and partners implement a range of projects that deliver cash assistance and in-kind support to vulnerable families, improve access to adequate shelter, expand education and skills training, provide entrepreneurial support, implement quick impact livelihoods projects, and develop public infrastructure including schools, healthcare facilities, community centers and roads. UNHCR's and partners' programmes also promote durable solutions for returnees and IDPs through efforts to expand access to land, documentation, social services, self-reliance, and inclusion in decision-making structures.

In 2020, further efforts will be made to support the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in these areas, in close partnership with the Government, NGOs, UN agencies, development actors, civil society and the private sector.

LINK TO NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR RETURNEES AND IDPS

The activities prioritized in the PARR locations are in line with the main goals of the National Policy Framework for Returnees and IDPs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, as devised by the Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC). The objective of the policy is to ensure safe reintegration of returnees and IDPs in Afghanistan and to encourage their active participation in identifying sustainable solutions that promote self-reliance, consistent with the priorities of the SSAR. The government's policy aims to ensure that the impact on host communities is also taken into consideration. The areas most fully aligned with the PARRs are:

Access to documentation

Improving registration and documentation of all returnees through digital registration, quick, easy and transparent access to Tazkeras; accepting alternate documentation for quick access to educational institutions for returnee children, promoting birth registration and electronic IDs.

Access to land and adequate housing

Addressing land allocation and security of tenure through viable site selection criteria, clear eligibility/prioritization criteria for target groups to apply for land, land tenure security, Law of Occupancy Certificates, upgrading irregular settlements on non-contested land, promoting affordable social housing options, transitional shelters, formal transfers of land titles, and expansion of service delivery to these areas.

Access to education

Access to education for returnee students through acceptance of alternate documentation for quick school admissions, waiver of certification fees for educational documents and recognition of credentials of returnee teachers/professors.

Access to livelihoods

Improving returnee access to livelihoods and jobs through socio-economic baselines, market assessment, institutional mapping, Jobs for Peace initiatives, facilitated access to labour markets and an enabling environment for livelihoods in the host/return area.

GROUNDBREAKING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE ON LAND ALLOCATION FOR RETURNEES

The Presidential Decree is key among the significant initiatives undertaken by the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to ensure the inclusion of returnees in national programming. Issued on 29 August 2018, it aims to allocate suitable governmental land for building affordable housing for returnees and internally displaced people in provinces of high return and displacement. This helps ensure that return and reintegration are sustainable over the longer-term and that the root causes of displacement and humanitarian crises are addressed.

The Afghan government, working with the Sustainable Human Settlements in Urban Areas (SHURA) programme, aims to operationalize the decree by ensuring the provision of quality land, housing and security tenure for returnees and IDPs. The SHURA programme is supporting the Afghanistan Land Authority (ARAZI) to inventory 19,000 hectares of State land in the provinces of high return and displacement, establish government ownership of the land and viability for human settlement and develop a Land Bank database. Following this process, plots of land will be distributed to the returnees and other Afghans based on key considerations for eligibility criteria set out in the Decree.

MODEL PARR PROJECTS: DESCRIPTIONS & COST ESTIMATION

UNHCR carries out a wide range of activities in the PARR areas, ranging from the construction of schools to the rehabilitation of road networks. Provided below is a list of model projects and the related estimated costs broken down by sector. The estimated costs are based on similar projects carried out in the past, both implemented directly by UNHCR and through partners.

Strengthening Education for boys and girls

Locations: Nangahar, Laghman, Herat, Kabul, Parwan, Bamyán, Daikundi

Construction of school buildings

USD 170,000 – USD 300,000 per school

School building consists of six to twelve classrooms, (750cm x 500cm each in size), administrative rooms (400cm x 300cm each in size), a 250cm wide corridor, a staircase of 500cm x 400cm), a laboratory (750cm x 500cm), a meeting room

(750cm x 500cm) and a wooden framed roof structure with corrugated iron sheets over concrete slab.

Other facilities and amenities for the school building include:

- Delivery and installation of 200 desks and chairs for the classroom and equipment for the laboratory including desks and chairs
- Five latrines (150cm x 200cm each in size) with a septic tank (200cm x 150cm x 150cm)
- A 60m meter water well to ensure a steady water supply to the building
- A reinforced cement concrete water reservoir to store the water needed for water and sanitation.
- Construction of a garbage collection point
- Construction of 270m long boundary wall with a main gate and a pedestrian gate.



Based on the size of the school building and the facilities available, the cost of implementation will increase as per the following:

- Construction of a six-classroom school building
USD 170,000
- Construction of an eight-classroom school building
USD 210,000
- Construction of a ten-classroom school building
USD 250,000
- Construction of a twelve-classroom school building
USD 300,000

Strengthening Health facilities in the communities

Locations: Balkh, Jawzjan, Nangahar, Laghman, Kandahar, Kabul, Parwan, Daikundi

Construction of a basic health clinic

USD 300,000

Beneficiaries: 50 – 200 patients per day

The basic health clinic consists of eight rooms and the following facilities and amenities:

- Primary Health Unit
- Out-patient department including maternity section
- In-patient department.
- Latrines
- Basic medical equipment and medicine storage capacity
- Perimeter wall and access gates

Construction of a community health clinic

USD 750,000

Beneficiaries: 150 – 400 patients per day



The community health clinic consists of 15 rooms and the following facilities and amenities:

- Waiting area and patient registry
- Outpatient unit
- Maternity unit
- Overnight ward, as needed
- Five latrines each for males and females
- Latrines for staff including a septic tank.
- Medical warehouse
- Administration facilities, including communication and data traffic space
- Workshop, general stockroom and technical depot
- Personnel accommodation area
- Shower
- Kitchen
- Dedicated space of the pharmacist
- Basic Medical equipment
- Infusion fluids and other medical fluids
- A potable water well with elevated water reservoir equipped with solar powered electricity system
- Perimeter wall with both pedestrian and vehicle gates

Ensuring a steady water supply to the communities

Locations: Kunduz, Nangahar, Laghman, Herat, Daikundi , Kabul

Drilling of water-wells

USD 5,000 (shallow well: 60 metres depth), USD 7,000 (deep well: 100 -120 meters depth)



The project involves the drilling of a shallow or deep water well, the delivery and the installation of pipes, filters and a submersible pump. The wells are constructed in two sizes (14-inch and 16-inch). The larger well is also equipped with a solar powered system capable of tapping water from the well to the reservoir.

Construction of reservoir

USD 15,000

The project involves the delivery and installation of two story elevated metallic and galvanized water reservoir of 20,000 litres storage capacity with all required accessories and related activities.

Construction of close water delivery network (500 metres)

USD 12,000

Beneficiaries: Up to 100 households

The project involves the excavation of a one-meter deep trench, setting up outlet pipes of different diameters, fittings and stand posts with accessories.

Providing Energy to households

Locations:

Provision of electricity

USD 150,000

Beneficiaries: Up to 200 households



The project involves the construction of a Micro Hydro Power (MHP) plant with an intake, 300 metre feeding canal, forebay, penstock, power house with turbines and gridlines to individual households.

Ensuring steady access routes to PARRs

Locations: Kunduz, Balkh, Daikundi

**Rehabilitating roads**

USD 12,000: without side ditches, USD 40,000: with side ditches.

The project involves the grading and levelling of a one-kilometre road including the compaction and placing of gravel-grain mix soil in three layers. The side ditches are 1.5 metres x 0.7 meters in size and constructed using stone.

Construction of culvert (without side ditches)

USD 40,000

Construction of a culvert including base work, a foundation made of stone, a slab and parapet walls.

PROJECTS IN PARRS CHANGING LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

JALALABAD: NEW SCHOOL BRINGS HOPE FOR BETTER EDUCATION FOR AFGHAN CHILDREN PROJECT COST: USD 286,000

In 2019, UNHCR started to expand an existing school by constructing a two-story building with 24 classrooms to strengthen existing education facilities in Daman, Jalalabad. The school had only twenty classrooms for over four thousand students. Even with a two-shift approach, the school was exceeding its capacity and many classes were taking place in makeshift tents and out in the open. Overcrowding, lack of a safe learning environment and limited access to toilets at the school has also had an impact on the high rate of dropouts, particularly amongst girls. The project to expand the school, improve the sanitation facilities and provide access to clean drinking water, was launched in consultation with the community and Department of Education.



Schoolchildren learning their lessons in the makeshift classroom, eagerly awaiting the completion of their new school seen in the background UNHCR/Y. Rahman /2019

LIVELIHOODS PROJECT HELPING RETURNEES THRIVE

PROJECT COST: USD 669,300 Rahimullah – a refugee returnee from Pakistan – has a unique opportunity to earn a living doing what he loves from the comfort of his own home, thanks to the support of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) through Returnees Enterprise Development (RED) project. For 15 years, during his time in Pakistan, he and his family members carried out carpet weaving. He is now able to do the same in his home country. RED provided Rahimullah with a loom and he is among 50 beneficiaries who are now carrying out carpet weaving in his village. He says the money he earns from his home-based business is not only enough for him to send his children to

school, but also to pay for additional English lessons at a private tuition centre, which means he is also injecting economic support into the local community.



Rahimullah is using the loom donated by MORRD through the RED project to earn a living out of his own home Nangahar province ©MORRD/ 2019

HERAT: AMENA HOPES THE FRUITS OF HER LABOUR WILL HELP HER REACH HER DREAM PROJECT COST: USD 362,500

Amena, 24, fled with her family to Iran in the mid-1990s and returned to Afghanistan when she was 12 years old. After graduating from university in Herat she struggled to find work when she came across a UNHCR community-based protection project enhancing livelihoods for returnees, IDPs and local community members in Jebraïl, Herat. In 2018, she was selected as part of a four-person team to take part in training to grow and harvest plants in a greenhouse. Amena dreams of having her own greenhouse at home where she will grow mushrooms and saffron.



Amena was as part of a four-person team to take part in a UNHCR training to grow and harvest plants in a greenhouse ©UNHCR/ H. Macdonald / 2019

KABUL: NEW SCHOOL BRINGS AFGHAN STUDENTS IN FROM THE COLD

PROJECT COST: USD 218,100

A UNHCR -funded school building has given 500 children in a village north of Kabul a better chance at finishing their education. Though Qarabagh is a short drive from the city of Kabul, it faces serious security challenges. There is also a high rate of school drop out in this area, as children are often forced to stop their education to help with household responsibilities, start to work or get married. The difficulties faced by the students at the school are representative of several other issues plaguing the education system in Afghanistan.

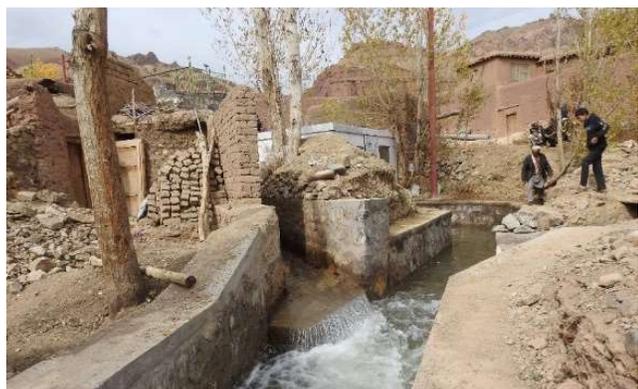
Investing in the education of refugees, the internally displaced, and those returning to their homelands, is the most powerful way for them to become self-reliant. It is also central to the future prosperity of their countries, or the places that have welcomed them.



Upto 500 school children can now comfortably follow their classes thanks to this school building ©UNHCR/ A. Wafa/ 2019

BAMYAN: HYDRO-POWER BRINGS BACK LIFE TO BAMYAN WINTERS

PROJECT COST: USD 59,170



A micro-hydro power plant revived in a PARR location in Bamyan. . The plant in Topchi provides power to 250 households including refugee returnees, IDPs and the local community. ©UNHCR/ M.A. Naqibullah/ 2019s

UNHCR has rehabilitated a micro hydro power plant in Topchi, a sub-village of priority area of return and reintegration Shashpool in Bamyan province. The project is a result of community consultation and local government support. Micro hydro is a type of hydroelectric power that uses the natural flow of water, providing an economical source of energy without the purchase of fuel. Bamyan province in the central highlands region of Afghanistan is characterized by its mountainous landscapes and known for its harsh winters. The plant in Topchi produces 22Kw of electricity providing power to 250 households (1,750 individuals) including refugee returnees, IDPs and the local community.



The machinery in the micro-hydro power plant that was revived in a PARR location in Bamyan. The plant in Topchi provides power to 250 households including refugee returnees, IDPs and the local community. ©UNHCR/ C. Buren/ 2019

CONTACT DETAILS:

Sulakshani Perera | External Relations Officer |
pererasu@unhcr.org | Cell: +93 (0) 791990011

M. Nader Farhad | Associate Public Information Officer |
farhadm@unhcr.org | Cell: + 93 (0) 791990018