Regional Refugee Response Plan
for Afghanistan Situation
2023

Regional Refugee Response Plan for Afghanistan Situation

Midyear Report 2023

Cover Photograph:

Iran (Islamic Republic of). Refugee schoolgirls playing during a break in Senman, Iran. All children, including Afghan refugee girls benefit from education in Iran. © UNHCR/Hossein Eidizadeh

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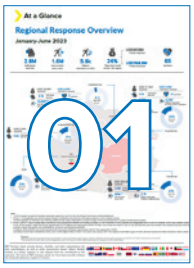

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At a Glance

Regional Response Overview

January-June 2023

2.8M individuals reached**

8.2M estimated total Afghan population

1.6 M new arrivals since 2021***

14K Afghan returnees in 2023

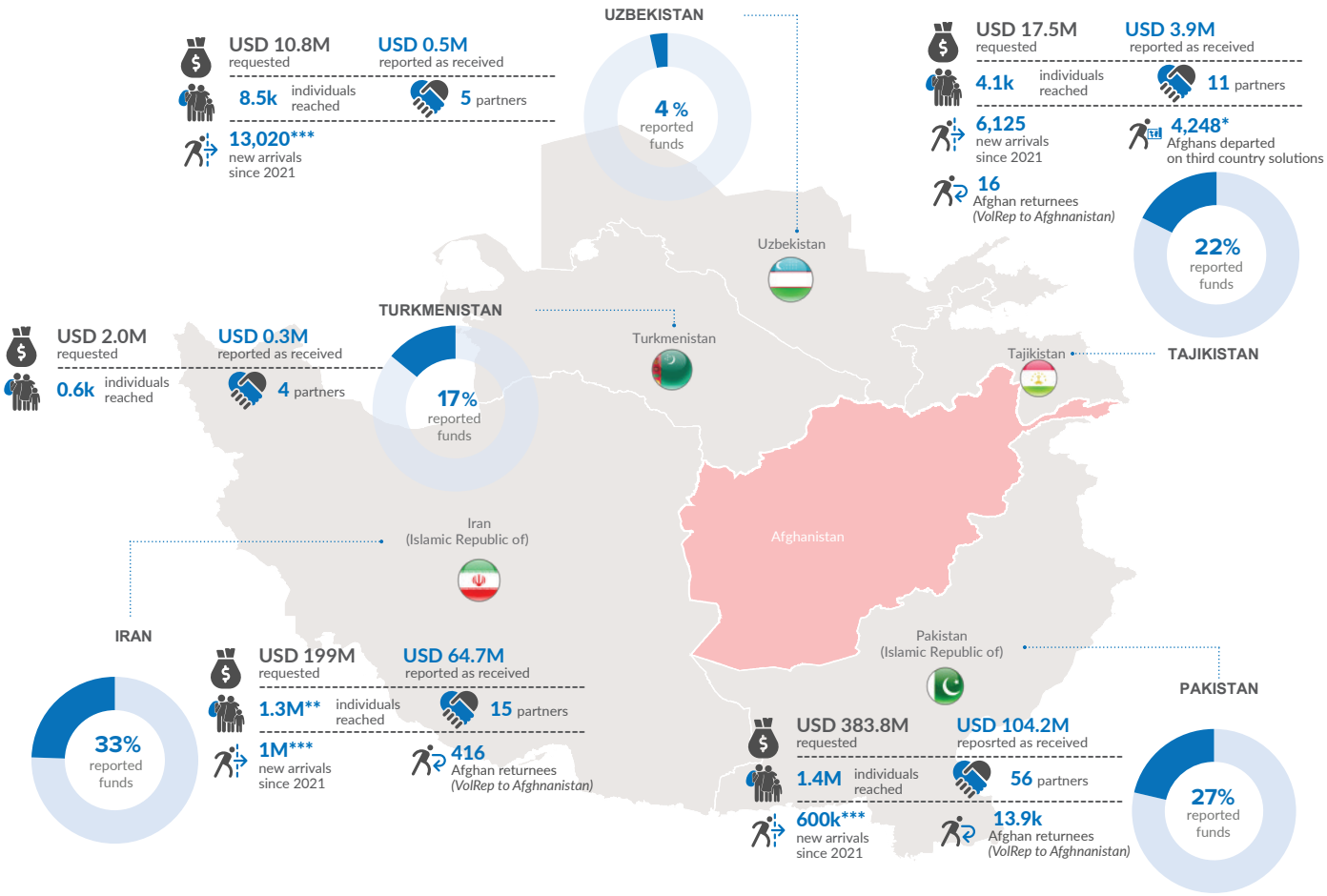
28% Reported funds

USD613M Funds required

USD173.6M Funds received

Note : Funding figures are as of end-September 2023

65 partners



Note :

* *4,199 to Canada through the Canadian sponsorship programme, and 49 to the USA through Government-assisted Resettlement*

** *Overall 1.1M beneficiaries were directly assisted through a combination of in-kind and cash-based assistance as well as tailored services.*
A further estimated 2k individuals were indirectly assisted through support RRP partners provided to public services and infrastructure in support of GIRI inclusive policies.

*** *In Iran, UNHCR is using an average figure according to various government estimates and continues to follow-up with authorities to receive updated and disaggregated data as well as an estimate of how many presently remain in Iran. Of the average 1 million new arrivals, approximately 62,149 Afghans have approached UNHCR. For those new arrivals who remain in Iran, it is also assumed that some were enrolled in the headcount exercise, which has provided a degree of protection and predictability for previously undocumented populations.*
In Pakistan, of the 600,000 new arrivals reported by the Government of Pakistan, approximately 330,872 have approached UNHCR.
According to Government of Uzbekistan sources, some 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021. The majority arrived before August 15 with valid visas issued by the Uzbek consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Disclaimer :
Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not been agreed upon by the parties.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

RRP Partners thank private donors, charities, and other organizations for their contributions, as well as other government donors whose flexible funding at a global, regional, or sub regional level has contributed to the response. The work of RRP partners would not have been possible without the extremely generous support of Donors.

Private Donors

Regional Situation Overview

In the first half of 2023, the humanitarian, socioeconomic, and human rights situation inside Afghanistan remained volatile. The ensuing shocks following the events of mid-2021, continued to exacerbate most Afghan households' vulnerabilities. The situation has also been further complicated by restrictions on women's rights and directives by de facto authorities banning Afghan female staff from working for non-governmental organizations and the UN respectively – significantly slowing humanitarians' efforts to reach and serve women and girls.

Similarly, the situation for Afghans in the neighbouring host countries has been increasingly challenging. The economic situation in the region has worsened, livelihoods opportunities have greatly reduced, natural and climate-related disasters becoming more frequent and severe. In the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, inflation has hit record highs and increased the cost of rent and basic goods and services. All this combined continues to have a disproportionately negative impact on Afghan refugees, returnees and asylum-seekers, as well as the communities that generously host them.

Since 2021, **over 1.6 million Afghans have arrived in neighbouring countries**, adding a significant additional burden on host countries which **now host over 8 million Afghans**. In 2023, the Islamic Republic of Iran officially became the second-largest refugee-hosting country in the world, with a population of at least 3.4 million refugees and individuals in a refugee-like situation following the inclusion of 2.6 million "headcounted" Afghans, including over 1 million who arrived since 2021. In total, Iran hosts 4.5 million Afghans. Iran extended its inclusive health and education policies to all Afghans in the country. Although borders into Iran remained officially closed for those trying to seek asylum and are only open for those with valid passports or visas, Afghans continue to make their way to Iran informally through unofficial border crossing points. To Pakistan, border entry at Torkham is limited to those with valid passports and visas. Meanwhile, in Central Asia, borders are only open to visa holders. Over 1.4 million IDPs have chosen to return to their areas of origin in Afghanistan. **In the first half of 2023, 10,644 Afghan refugees have voluntarily returned to Afghanistan, surpassing the total of 6,424 Afghan refugees who voluntarily returned to Afghanistan in 2022**.

Given this dynamic context, the RRP's community- and area- based approach, which focuses the response on Afghans and the communities that host them, has become even more pertinent. **RRP partners are continuing to work through government systems wherever possible, supporting national authorities' efforts to maintain and strengthen those systems in the spirit of responsibility sharing**. Moreover, the increase in the number of partners to 65 across the five countries (Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) – 14 UN agencies, 21 International NGOs, and 30 National NGOs – underlines the increasing importance of the plan in such challenging circumstances.

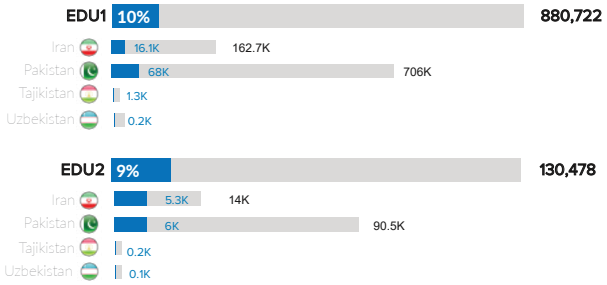
Considering the deteriorating conditions in host countries, more support is needed to address the widening gap between available resources and needs of Afghans and their host communities. Although RRP partners have stepped up their efforts to prioritise the most critical activities, the impact of significantly less funding will be catastrophic, and risks endangering lives and contributing to further instability in an already volatile region.

Regional Achievements by Sector

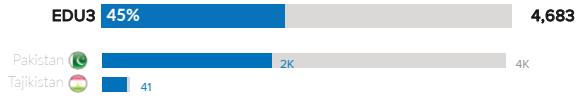
Actual | Annual Target | Above Target

EDUCATION

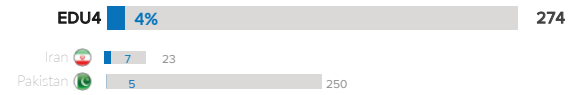
97,338 children (including Afghan refugees, Afghans of other status and members of the host community) supported to access **primary** (85,630 children) & **secondary** (11,708 children) **education**



2,095 Afghan students supported to access **tertiary education**



12 educational facilities **constructed** or **rehabilitated**



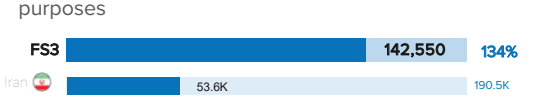
FOOD SECURITY

189,840 individuals received **in-kind food assistance**

Note: WFP reported to have provided food assistance to 31,640 unique beneficiaries monthly. The total number of reached by WFP at mid-year is estimated to 189,840.

1 Post Distribution Monitoring (**PDM**) conducted in Iran(Islamic Republic of)

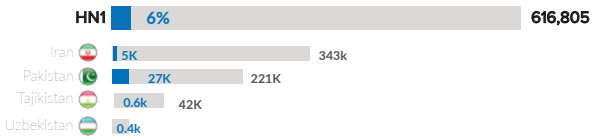
190,530 individuals received **CBI** for food security purposes



Note: WFP reported to have provided CBI for food security purposes to 31,755 unique beneficiaries monthly. The total number of reached by WFP at mid-year is estimated to 189,840.

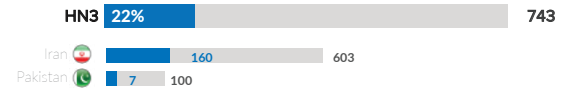
HEALTH AND NUTRITION

34,147 Afghans supported to access **secondary** and **tertiary** healthcare services

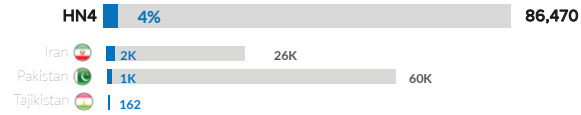


13 health facilities **constructed** or **rehabilitated**

167 health facilities supported with **equipment, medicines and medical supplies, salaries**

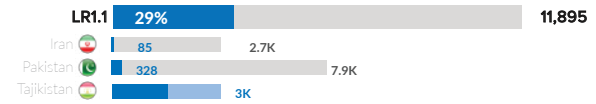


3,562 individuals received **CBI** for health and nutrition purposes

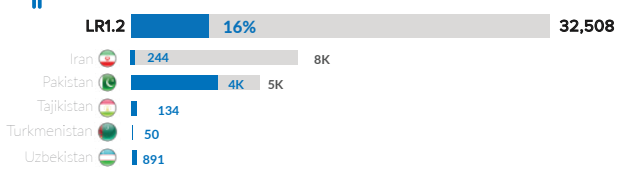


LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

3,504 individuals supported with business grants, cash for work, or in-kind **support to establish their own businesses**



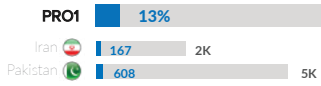
5,339 individuals benefited from **vocational training**



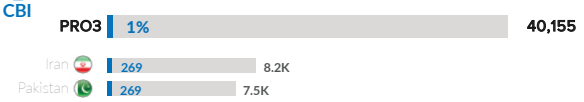
Actual *Annual Target* *Above Target*

PROTECTION

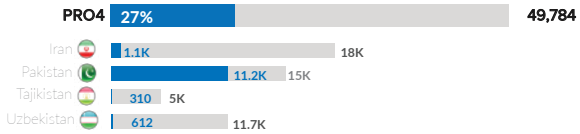
775 newly identified children at heightened risk supported by a Best Interests Procedure (**BIP**)



538 individuals received **CBI** for protection related purposes

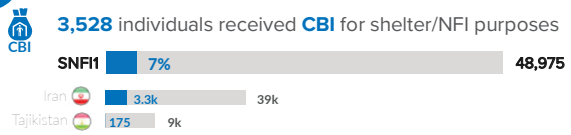


13,334 persons accessed **feedback and response mechanisms** (calls to hotline, messages to mailbox, or in-person approach)

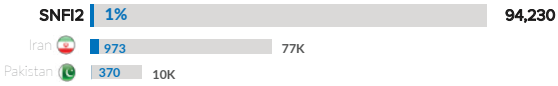


SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

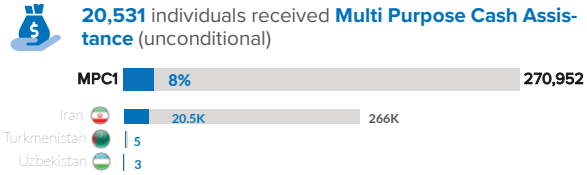
3,528 individuals received **CBI** for shelter/NFI purposes



1,343 individuals provided with **core relief items**, including winterization assistance

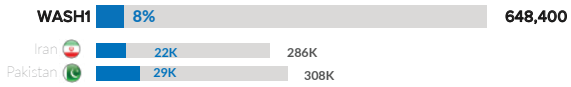


20,531 individuals received **Multi Purpose Cash Assistance** (unconditional)



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

51,888 persons received **hygienic supplies**



109,419 people reached with **improved access to basic drinking water services**

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

An Afghan refugee girl waiting for classes to start in Ansar school in Semnan refugee settlement, Semnan, Iran
© UNHCR/Hossein Eidizadeh

1.3M individuals reached**

4.5M estimated total Afghan population

1 M new arrivals since 2021***

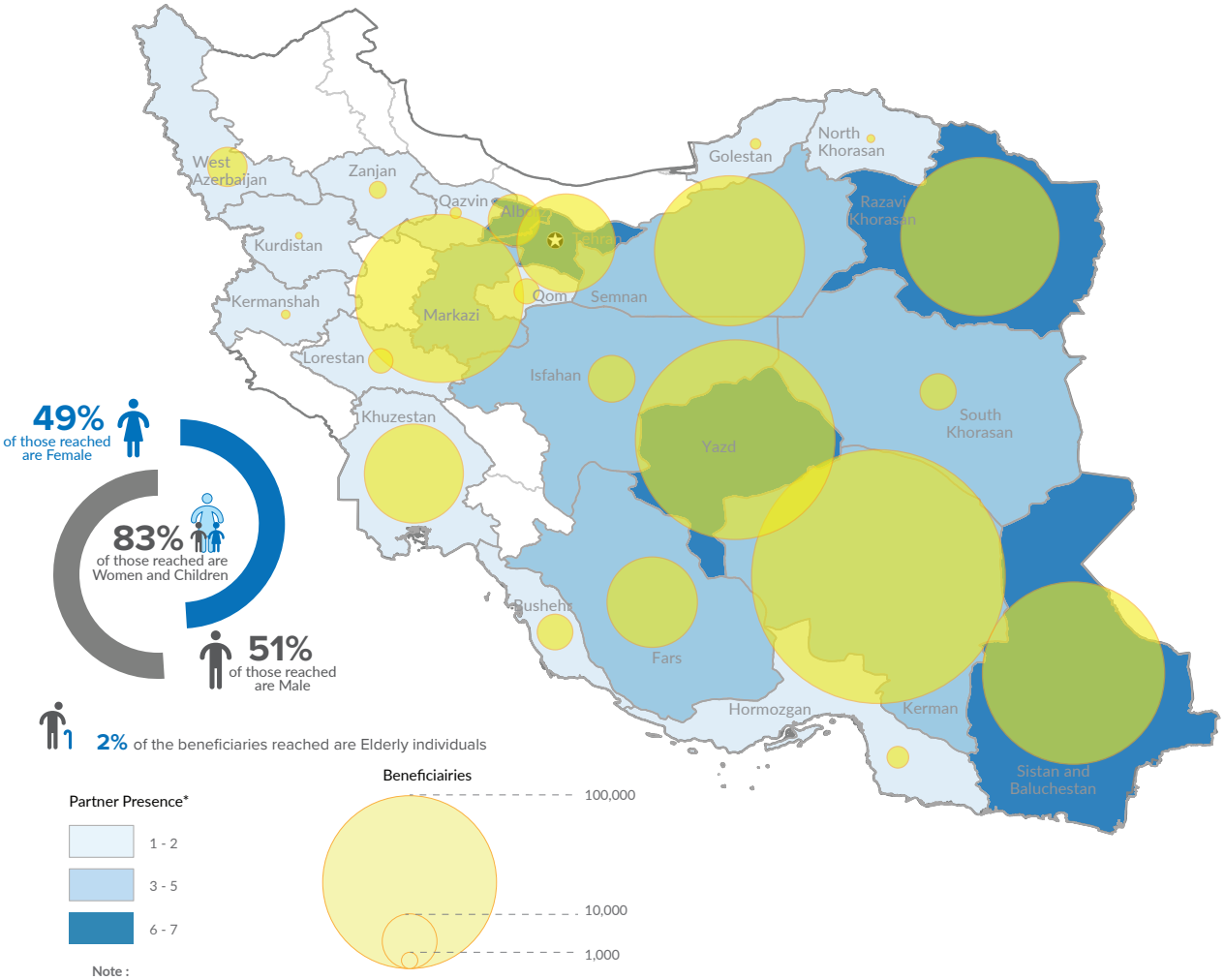
412 Afghan returnees in 2023

33% Reported funds

USD199M Funds required

USD64.7M Funds received

15 partners



Note :

* *The partner's presence is based on activities reported by appealing agencies during January-June 2023 per provinces in the reporting platform*

** *Overall 1.1M beneficiaries were directly assisted through a combination of in-kind and cash-based assistance as well as tailored services. A further estimated 2k individuals were indirectly assisted through support RRP partners provided to public services and infrastructure in support of GIRI inclusive policies.*

*** *In Iran, UNHCR is using an average figure according to various government estimates and continues to follow-up with authorities to receive updated and disaggregated data as well as an estimate of how many presently remain in Iran. Of the average 1 million new arrivals, approximately 62,149 Afghans have approached UNHCR. For those new arrivals who remain in Iran, it is also assumed that some were enrolled in the headcount exercise, which has provided a degree of protection and predictability for previously undocumented populations.*

Disclaimer :
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Achievement Overview

Actual *Annual Target* *Above Target*

EDUCATION

21,451 children (including Afghan refugees, Afghans of other status and members of the host community) supported to access **primary** (16,175 children) & **secondary** (5,276 children) **education**

EDU1	10%	162,682
EDU2	37%	14,070

7 educational facilities (schools) **constructed** or **rehabilitated**

EDU4	30%	23

120 classrooms constructed or rehabilitated

EDU5.1-2	47%	255

FOOD SECURITY

189,840 individuals received **in-kind food assistance**

FS1	52,000	365%

Note: WFP reported to have provided food assistance to 31,640 unique beneficiaries monthly. The total number of reached by WFP at mid-year is estimated to 189,840.

CBI

190,530 individuals received **CBI** for food security purposes

FS3	53,600	355%

Note: WFP reported to have provided CBI for food security purposes to 31,755 unique beneficiaries monthly. The total number of reached by WFP at mid-year is estimated to 189,840.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

5,126 Afghans supported to access **secondary** and **tertiary** healthcare services

HN1	1%	342,932

3 health facilities **constructed** or **rehabilitated**

HN2	14%	22

160 health facilities supported with equipment, medicines and medical supplies, salaries

HN3	25%	630

CBI

2,284 individuals received **CBI** for health and nutrition purposes

HN4	9%	26,220

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

85 individuals supported with business grants, cash for work, or in-kind **support to establish their own businesses**

LR1	3%	2,725

244 individuals benefited from **vocational training**

LR2	3%	8,361

PROTECTION

3,007 individuals received **technical legal support**

PRO2	30%	10,110

29,155 people supported with counselling on assistance and services, registration, documentation and global protection

PRO1	32%	90,330

CBI

1,833 individuals (includig women, men, boys and girls) reached with **psychosocial support** counselling sessions

PRO5	72%	2,540

167 newly identified children at heightened risk supported by a Best Interests Procedure (**BIP**)

PRO8	8%	2,200

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

CBI

3,345 individuals received **CBI** for shelter/NFI purposes

SNFI1	8%	39,525

973 individuals provided with **core relief items**, including winterization assistance

SNFI2	1%	77,225

20,523 individuals received **Multi Purpose Cash Assistance** (unconditional)

MPC1	8%	266,205

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

22,410 individuals received **hygienic supplies**

WASH1	8%	286,100

2,210 latrines constructed or rehabilitated for **persons with disabilities**

WASH5.6	1,077	205%

Situation Overview

The Islamic Republic of Iran currently estimates the presence of **at least 4.5 million Afghans with varying legal statuses**. This includes some 3.4 million individuals who have been issued with documentation in relation to the situation inside Afghanistan by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (GIRI)– **the 2022 headcount exercise initiated by GIRI resulted in 2.6 million Afghans being recorded and issued with documentation** resulting in a short-term legal stay arrangement including protection from refoulement. Among the headcounted individuals at least 1 million arrived in August 2021. Of the new arrivals who have approached UNHCR since November 2021, an estimated 40% are women and girls, with 42% of all households approaching UNHCR in this period being female-headed. A deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, characterized by human rights violations and a collapse of the economy and national services continues to result in cross-border movements of Afghans to Iran, with the presence of family in Iran, socio-cultural links (including a shared language and religious affinities) and for some a desire to move onward to Europe all key factors informing this decision. Due to limited pathways for entry into the country for those without documentation, the majority of Afghans continue to cross into Iran using irregular means resulting in a large population of undocumented Afghans many of whom are in situations of vulnerability and at risk of deportation, exploitation, and other harmful situations while facing barriers to accessing services.

Consistent with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) objectives, the RRP seeks to contribute to the self-reliance of Afghans in Iran. However, against the global and national backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated at country-level by currency depreciation, opportunities to enhance the self-reliance of Afghans has been limited. Structural factors, most notably continued barriers to both employment under certain job categories and access to Temporary Work Permits for undocumented Afghans, compound this situation. At the same time, administrative bottlenecks, most notably due to the ongoing transition of line ministry accountabilities from the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA) to the National Organization for Migration (NOM), have also delayed the signing of partnership agreements and programme implementation. Although the NOM bill is still pending formal adoption by the Iranian parliament, moving forward the revised organizational structure is anticipated to provide a platform for more robust and coherent engagement with the Government on issues pertaining to refugees and migrants moving forward.

Government Response

In 2023, Iran maintained its inclusive policies by continuing to allow everyone – regardless of status – access to education and primary health services. This has been crucial in ensuring Afghan refugees are not left behind and helping to address basic needs while simultaneously contributing to the self-reliance of this population, many of whom are second or third generation refugees. However, access to territory remains constrained for Afghans without valid passports and visas. Afghans who entered Iran irregularly and the in situ undocumented population continue to be affected by the absence of an accessible and fair asylum system or other measures to (temporarily) regularize their stay. This has heightened the risk of deportation, particularly for those arriving through porous borders after the headcount exercise and thus currently without a stay arrangement and unable to access essential services.[1]

Across Iran, **most Afghan refugees continue to live side-by-side with their Iranian host communities, predominantly in urban and peri-urban environments**. However, sharp price increases in almost all sectors and services are posing substantial challenges to the government's ability to maintain its inclusive policies. Greater international responsibility-sharing is needed to support Iran in maintaining their progressive policies, including through support to RRP partner programmes.

1 The actual number of cross-border movements is likely much higher than the number who approach UNHCR. According to the Government of Iran, the total number of daily arrivals from Afghanistan number some 4,000 per day. Approximately 40 per cent of these daily new arrivals are deported in the days, weeks, or months after their arrival.

As part of a learning activity, refugee student made a TV box in Ansar school in Semnan refugee settlement, Semnan, Iran
© UNHCR/Hossein Eidizadeh

Key Interagency programmes

PROTECTION

Protection Sector partners, especially UNHCR and NRC, provided tailored in person and remote counselling to some 50,000 refugees and asylum seekers on access to assistance and services as well as access to documentation in Iran; additionally, some 24,000 individuals were reached with generic information sessions on inter alia rights and obligations in the country of asylum, documentation, and procedures regarding access to services. Individual counselling sessions not only lead to identification and referral for further assistance but also serve as important avenues to enhance understanding of needs and risks faced by refugees and asylum seekers while also providing opportunities for humanitarian partners to receive feedback on services provided. Through counselling sessions, 375 individuals with heightened protection concerns were identified and received case management support from UNHCR including via Best Interest Procedures for children and comprehensive sessions for women at risk; many individuals were also referred for detailed assessment to receive multi-purpose cash assistance. Crucially, counselling also enables identification of individuals and households in situations of extreme vulnerability and risk who may be eligible for resettlement submission.

While implementation of community and group-based activities remains constrained due to limited permissions from authorities, some 500 children participated in wellbeing and development activities in a child friendly spaces in Razavi Khorasan province implemented by Relief International. IOM and UNFPA continue to work towards agreement with authorities to establish centres facilitating activities for women and children in underserved areas.

Individual psychosocial counselling is provided by five experienced psychosocial counsellors contracted by UNHCR to those struggling with anxiety, depression, suicidal ideations, or other signs of severe mental distress. By mid-year, 1,610 individuals accessed individual counselling sessions with just over half of the sessions taking place in person with the remainder remotely; 186 refugees were referred externally for further follow-up. Through ongoing activities in health posts, INTERSOS facilitated access for at least 220 individuals to specialized psychosocial counselling.

However, a considerable gap persists with at least 1,975 identified cases requiring assistance while unidentified needs are likely to outweigh response capacities.

UNHCR continues to operate a Legal Services Project in Iran that provides legal assistance and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to Afghans. This long-standing project includes 16 Dispute Settlement Committees, which offer an alternative and free-of-charge service that complements judicial processes alongside 17 UNHCR-hired Lawyers covering 19 provinces, who provide free legal advice and assistance to Afghan and Iraqi refugees and serve as points of contact with the refugee community. In the first six months of 2023, some 3,007 individuals were supported with legal advice or dispute resolution.

HEALTH

Primary health care services **remained available to all displaced people**, regardless of documentation status and at the same level as Iranians. In 2023, UNHCR signed a Tripartite Partnership Agreement with BAFIA and the Iran Health Insurance Organization (IHIO) to enable registered refugees to have facilitated access to the UPHI scheme for one year and access to secondary and tertiary health care at subsidized rates. Through this partnership, UNHCR will support 95,000 of the most vulnerable refugees with access to health insurance free-of-charge on par with Iranian nationals over the course of the year. This will help to mitigate financial challenges that can prevent refugees from accessing health care for out-patient and in-patient services. In addition to the support provided by UNHCR in partnership with IHIO, three other RRP partners have also helped to expand access to UPHI through direct cash support to vulnerable refugees/ refugee-like populations. During the first half of the year 5,100 individuals were provided with direct cash assistance that enabled them to enrol in UPHI through support from Relief International (2,375), UNFPA (2,051) and IOM (700).

In response to a request from Iran's Centre for Communicable Diseases (CDC) to support early detection and enhance laboratory diagnostic capacities, WHO procured rapid diagnostic test kits for Hepatitis B and C. These diagnostic kits will cover approximately 30,000 refugees and have been distributed across 10 different medical schools in Iran. WHO is also supporting follow-up with the CDC through distribution monitoring.

NUTRITION

In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME), UNICEF will support the provision of vitamin A supplements for 1,900,000 children aged two to five years old in settlements and host communities through stocks procured and supplied to MoHME health posts. As per stated plans under the 2023 RRP, UNICEF in collaboration with MoH aims to reach 950,000 children with these supplements by the end of 2023, with a particular focus on areas with a high concentration of refugees. In addition, UNICEF is currently working with MoHME to develop national guidelines on the application of standard nutrition items to manage malnutrition in children under five years old. This will facilitate the targeted provision of nutrition items procured according to needs/ individual requirements, improving the overall quality of assistance provided.

WASH

IOM provided hygiene kits to 1,000 vulnerable households in Kerman province. To promote good hygiene and contribute to a more safe and dignified living environment, IOM also constructed or rehabilitated 90 sanitation facilities to improve households' hygiene conditions in the Afghan settlement of Saveh as of the end of June, benefitting 450 individuals.

UNICEF continues to work with local authorities to construct a feeder line connecting the new Niatak settlement to the mains water network. This feeder line will ensure a more sustainable supply of water to the settlement.

LIVELIHOODS

IOM refurbished and equipped a tailoring workshop in the Torbat-e-Jam settlement with sewing machines and other materials for some 100 Afghans. Not only do projects such as these improve displaced Afghans' short-term prospects and enhance their access to durable solutions, they also foster community resilience and self-reliance.

UNHCR supported 55 female refugees through technical and vocational trainings in the first half of 2023, in collaboration with the Iran Life Quality Improvement Association (ILIA). These covered vocations including candle making, hairdressing and tailoring. By the end of the year UNHCR plans to assist 836 individuals across 19 provinces in partnership with the Technical and Vocational Training Organization.

NRC supported some 199 individuals in the first half of 2023 through a variety of livelihood activities spanning Tehran, Kerman, Sistan and Baluchestan and Alborz provinces. This included 113 individuals through technical and vocational training, 20 individuals through income-generation workshops and 56 individuals who received business skills training.

FOOD SECURITY

WFP addressed the food needs of almost 32,000 refugees residing in 20 settlements via the distribution of in-kind food and cash assistance during the reporting period. Under its school meals programme, WFP also delivered daily school snacks such as milk, date bars or biscuits to more than 8,700 boys and girls and teachers across 42 primary and junior high schools exclusively in settlements. Since early 2023, WFP has been piloting a disability inclusion programme in Semnan and Saveh settlements where some 100 people with disabilities received cash assistance to help the meet their basic needs.

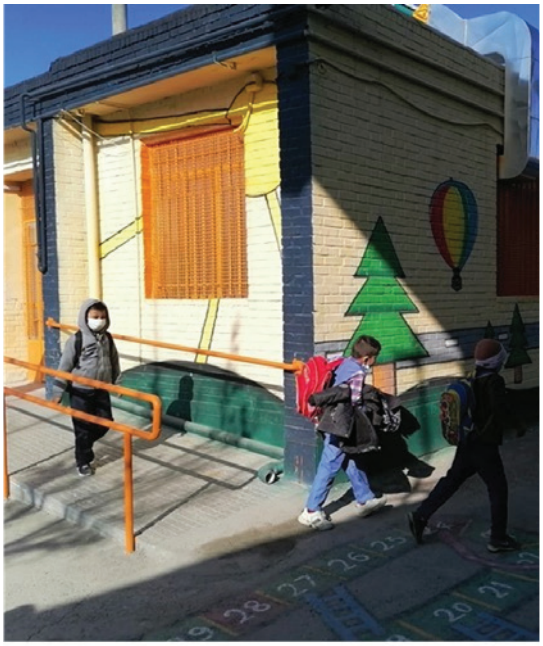
EDUCATION

UNICEF supported the provision of remedial classes for more than 1,500 Afghan and Iranian children in six provinces. This programme complemented the regular curriculum, providing essential support to students requiring short-term assistance and helping to reduce educational disparities between Afghan and host community children attending primary and secondary school.

NRC provided 3,482 stationery kits and rehabilitated 230 classrooms so that students can benefit from a better and safer learning environment.

WFP also provided cash incentives to 2,900 girls attending primary and junior high school to encourage them and their parents to continue their studies.

UNHCR supported the construction of 7 schools, indirectly benefitting approximately 5,080 students.



NRC supports the right to education for Afghan and Iranian children by providing stationery kits and rehabilitating schools so they can benefit from a better and safe learning environment.

Read full story HERE.

Photo Credits: ©NRC Iran

Consequences of Underfunding

OVERARCHING

Continued underfunding of the refugee response in Iran, including via national systems which are the sole solution to delivering services at scale, may result in reduced access to services and assistance. This would have a significant impact on population groups with significant vulnerabilities and needs related to their displacement and documentation status, including the 2.6 headcount participants as well as the large group of newly arriving and in situ undocumented individuals. Further concerns exist in relation to the maintenance of asylum space due to Government statements referring to increased international burden sharing as a critical enabler for Iran to continue hosting and provide inclusive basic services to millions of Afghan refugees.

PROTECTION

$270K

required to cover the operating costs of **three women's safe spaces** for the next six months. These centers once served as community hubs where women could come together to voice their needs and receive essential support. However, due to limited funding, all centers were closed in 2023, and this has had a significant impact on the provision of mental health and psychosocial support for women.

$900K

required to support **3,000 children with child protection case management.** The case management will link Afghan children who have been left behind to national child protection systems, provide cash-based assistance if required, and facilitate family reunification and identification of durable solutions based on Best Interest of the children.

$1.1M

in addition, is needed to enable **provision of specialized case management support and complementary interventions** to some **1,000 children at risk** and around **1,000 survivors of gender-based violence** through humanitarian partners. Failure to address these specific needs may result in increased risk of severe rights violations, lack of resilience and participation in society, continued abuse, and other harmful long-term impacts

$2M

required to assist an additional **4,000 Afghans**, especially adult women, with **legal counselling and support** as well as dedicated financial assistance to address matters related to **documentation** and/or family, labour, or other disputes. A lack of additional funding results in cases remaining unaddressed and some provinces and populations not having legal support and Dispute Settlement Committees available leading to risks of further tensions, a lack of accountability, and in documentation related cases deportations.

$1.5M

required to comprehensively support **15,000 Afghans** of all ages with **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support** needs through community-based and group level activities as well as counselling tailored to individual situations. Continued engagement with forcibly displaced Afghans highlights widespread mental health issues such as severe distress, depression, and in some cases suicidal thoughts with elevated concerns for the situation of women and girls recently arrived from Afghanistan. These issues need to be addressed in a preventative and responsive manner through protection spaces (activities in community centers, health posts, child friendly spaces, and women and girl friendly spaces) and through dedicated and specialized counseling respectively in order to support participation in society and livelihoods activities as well as to prevent suffering and further harm.

EDUCATION

$6.1M

required to support 142,800 school-aged children. This includes the provision of remedial classes to Afghan and Iranian children to compensate for learning gaps and improve retention, expanding and enhancing existing facilities, and distributing various student kits.

SHELTER & NFIs

$1.4M

needed to support approximately 100 households with shelter repairs and rehabilitation, country wide

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

$3.3M

required to support some 8,330 individuals targeted under the RRP through vocational training initiatives that enhance the employability of Afghan youth and provide support to Iranian businesses that hire Afghans.

$135K

required to provide networking support to 180 people to facilitate linkages between the market and the private sector to expand the income generation opportunities available to Afghan refugees.

HEALTH

$7M

required to provide and strengthen primary and secondary-health services in areas with a high concentration of refugees, serving approximately 1.15 million Afghan refugees and Iranian host community populations alike.

NUTRITION

$250K

required to support the identification of nutritional needs and address the basic nutritional needs of 33,750 mothers and their children by the end of 2023. Without this nutritional assistance, mothers and their children will face an increased risk of moderate or acute malnutrition.

FOOD SECURITY

88% Afghans Households in need

Up to 88 per cent of Afghans households in Iran suffer from insufficient food consumption, with the situation likely to have further deteriorated following the removal of some food subsidies and continued impact of high inflation. With the annual inflation rates of 45% between 2020-21, the price of food increased dramatically despite basic commodities are subsidized by the Government including bread. Although multi-purpose cash assistance has been provided to some 21,000 households to help them cover their basic needs, no dedicated food security sector response is currently being delivered outside the settlements, with a significant scale-up of funding required to enable expansion of the response beyond settlements.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

$2.3M

required to ensure access to water and cover the basic hygiene needs of 100,000 people living largely in the provinces bordering Afghanistan.

$650K

needed to ensure 4,000 people in the Semnan settlements have adequate sewage collection and wastewater systems to prevent the risk of a disease outbreak.

Pakistan

Afghan refugee woman trained at the Start (SFS) project in Quetta © UNHCR Pakistan

1.5M individuals reached

3.7M estimated total Afghan population

600K new arrivals since 2021**

13.9K Afghan returnees in 2023

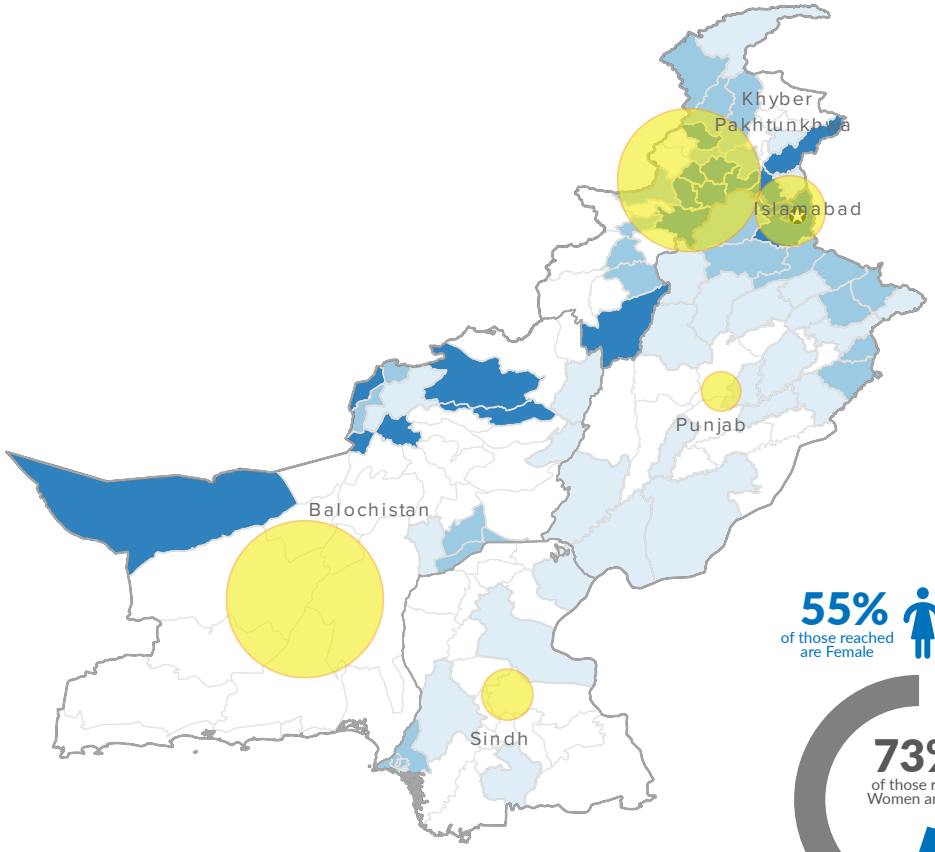
27% Reported funds

USD383.8M Funds required

USD104.2M Funds received

Note : funding as of mid-October 2023

56 partners



55% of those reached are Female

73% of those reached are Women and Children

45% of those reached are Male

2% of the beneficiaries reached are Elderly individuals

Partner Presence*

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 7
- 8 - 17

Beneficiairies

- 1,000,000
- 100,000
- 10,000

Note :
* The partner's presence is based on activities reported by implementing partners during January-June 2023 per district in the reporting platform
** Figure reported by the Government of Pakistan

Disclaimer :
Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not been agreed upon by the parties.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Achievement Overview

Actual *Annual Target* *Above Target*

EDUCATION

74,217 children (including Afghan refugees, Afghans of other status and members of the host community) supported to access **primary** (68,042 children) & **secondary** (6,175 children) education

EDU1	10%	706,055
EDU2	7%	90,473

5 educational facilities **constructed** or **rehabilitated**

EDU4	2%	250

62,473 students and teachers provided with education supplies

EDU6	8%	775,803

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

27,996 Afghans supported to access **secondary and tertiary healthcare services**

HN1	13%	221,273

10 health facilities **constructed or rehabilitated**

HN2	4%	248

7 health facilities supported with equipment, medicines and medical supplies, salaries

HN3	7%	100

73,625 pregnant and lactating women provided with IFA/MNT

HN7	32%	228,464

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

328 individuals supported with business grants, cash for work, or in-kind **support to establish their own businesses**

LR1.1	4%	7,930

4,020 individuals benefiting from **vocational training**

LR1.2	80%	5,022

PROTECTION

608 newly identified **children at heightened risk** supported by a Best Interests Procedure (**BIP**)

PRO1	12%	5,075

2,014 persons with disabilities supported through protection services

PRO5	81%	2,500

11,282 persons accessed **feedback and response mechanisms** (calls to hotline, messages to mailbox, or in-person approach)

PRO4	75%	15,000

102,681 individuals reached during **GBV awareness raising activities**

PRO6	44%	235,000

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

4,981 individuals provided with **solar lighting**

SNFI4	25%	20,000

6,874 households provided with energy efficient **cooking stoves**

SNFI6	34%	20,000

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

29,478 persons who received **hygienic supplies**

WASH1	10%	308,300

109,419 people reached with improved **access to basic drinking water services**

WASH2	7%	1,583,577

Situation Overview

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has provided a safe refuge to millions of Afghan refugees for over four decades and currently hosts 3.7 million Afghans, including both registered refugees and Afghans of other statuses. In 2023, **RRP partners continued to be instrumental in addressing the needs of Afghan refugees and Afghans of other status, as well as supporting host communities in the face of more frequent and severe natural disasters, an economic crisis and dynamic political environment**.

In 2023, the UNHCR-supported Document Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE) targeting government-registered Afghan refugees was extended and finalized by the Government of Pakistan. This extension enabled the verification of an additional 16,000 refugees in the first three months of the year, bringing to 1,328,425 the total number verified under the DRIVE exercise from 1 March 2021 and 31 March 2023. In the first half of 2023, 19,000 children were registered in the 11 Proof of Registration Card Modification (PCM) centres, and more than 10,000 children over 5 years old applied for their individual Proof of Registration (POR) cards, while 33,000 new PoR cards and 8,000 birth certificates were issued. UNHCR also increased the assistance provided to Afghan returnees with a $700 cash grant provided per family upon return to support their reintegration efforts – **from January to June 2023**, 1,347 families (5,652 individuals) were facilitated to voluntarily repatriate from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Some 6,874 households received energy-efficient cook stoves as part of **ongoing efforts** by UNHCR to sustainably meet the energy needs of people forced to flee. Not only did this reduce the protection risks Afghans face, but it also mitigated the likelihood of tension with nearby host communities over competition for the already limited natural resources as well as the associated environmental impacts.

Despite this, several challenges persisted. Skyrocketing inflation – which reached 38 per cent in May 2023 – had a significant impact on the most economically vulnerable, with the rising cost of living making it difficult for people to meet their basic needs. Pakistan remains highly susceptible to natural climate disasters with climate shocks such as heavy rainfall affecting housing, schools, and communal buildings in both refugee villages and host communities. As a result, efforts to enhance disaster risk reduction and build resilience among communities have been accelerated to mitigate the impact of future climate-related disasters.

Government Response

The Government of Pakistan continued to implement a flexible approach to Afghan refugees although support to Afghans of other statuses remains limited in terms of access to basic public services, including schools.

The Government of Pakistan has achieved significant policy milestones and reduced critical barriers to mainstream refugee children into national education systems, including its constitutional commitment to improving education and quality for all learners. This includes transitioning all 142 refugee village schools and grades to the Pakistani standard national curriculum, thus providing a pathway to national board examinations and certificates for refugee students. UNHCR continues to work closely with the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) to enhance Refugee Village teacher competencies. In 2023, PITE provided a comprehensive 20-day teacher training programme in Balochistan on early childhood education and training in science labs and practical learning methodologies. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNHCR and RRP partners are working closely with the Elementary & Secondary Education Department of KP (E&SED KP) to integrate refugee village school enrolment data into the provincial Education Management Information System (EMIS), thus improving access to refugee data to support policy and programming. RRP partners are committed to strengthening the absorption capacity of public schools to meet the needs of refugee and host community's children through the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme. UNHCR and the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees have identified 29 government schools In Punjab that are in need of education infrastructure support under RAHA. Tertiary education access is a critical pathway for refugees and UNHCR greatly welcomes the advocacy efforts by CCAR to secure 1,734 university spaces for refugees in coordination with the Higher Education Commission.

Key Interagency programmes

PROTECTION

In the first half of 2023, GBV awareness raising reached 102,681 individuals and 26,656 women and girls accessed safe spaces. Child protection interventions (including family tracing, case management, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for care givers and children, training of social workers, and awareness raising activities) reached around 31,000 people and over 3,200 social workers received training. Legal assistance was provided to over 22,584 individuals. Some 393 outreach volunteers were trained and supported to enhance community engagement. Assistance was provided by partners to over 2,000 people with disabilities including the provision of assistive devices and referrals to protection services.

By mid-year 47 per cent of GBV targets were reached, benefiting 146,000 individuals (69 per cent women and girls and 31 per cent men and boys) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Islamabad, and Punjab provinces. UNHCR leads the Protection sector in close coordination with the Child Protection and GBV subsectors led by UNICEF and UNFPA. IOM continues to have programming targeting Afghan Citizen cardholders and Afghans of other status including data collection on basic community needs and movement through IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix tool.

EDUCATION

Led by UNICEF, 141,379 primary and secondary school-aged children, including 60,000 girls, were reached through various initiatives, including accelerated learning programme centres, rehabilitation of schools, education scholarships, and remedial classes, while almost 1,300 teachers were trained. All of these efforts combined improved the learning and teaching environment for both students and teachers.

WASH

The WASH sector provided safe water and sanitation services to 280,035 Afghan refugees and host community members in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. Efforts are ongoing to further improve WASH infrastructure in schools and health care facilities. HANDS distributed hygiene kits (including Menstrual Hygiene Management kit (MHM), jerry cans, plastic buckets, soap, etc.) to 10,000 refugees in the same two provinces as part of ongoing efforts to promote good practice to reduce the risk of a disease outbreak.

Afghan refugees and members of the host community benefitting from WASH infrastructure ©UNICEF

Read the Full Story : HERE

FOOD SECURITY

To promote gender equality and self-reliance among refugees, FAO, together with UNHCR, kick started an agriculture-related project which plans to support 18,000 Afghan refugees and host communities in Kohat district, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, in collaboration with several government departments. As part of this project training is being provided on gardening, agriculture, and livestock, with tools, livestock, poultry, and seeds being distributed to beneficiaries.

LIVELIHOODS

The Livelihoods sector has made significant progress in providing critical support to build resilience, making a positive impact on the lives of vulnerable populations in Pakistan. In more than 14 districts of Pakistan, refugees and communities hosting them have benefited with transformative changes through programs encompassing awareness sessions, vocational training, and business support. Efforts on agriculture-related projects are enhancing the well-being of all targeted, improving food security and livelihoods. The partnership between Secours Islamique France (SIF) and UNHCR has played a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and fostering self-reliance among refugees in Pakistan. Collaborative efforts with Iqra University and coordination with UNHCR and The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTECC) are underway, enabling greater government linkages and coordination at a larger scale. Meanwhile, IOM has provided 14,911 households with cash assistance under the sector, including 3,533 female-headed households.

Consequences of Underfunding

OVERARCHING

The Pakistan chapter of the Afghan Situation Refugee Response Plan (RRP) funding appeal is only 27 per cent funded with USD 104.17 million received of the USD 383.76 million requirements as of end September. A significant increase in funding is required to continue to provide assistance to about 3 million people through the end of 2023. RRP partners are dealing with large funding gaps across all sectors with some key examples highlighted below. The current underfunding of the RRP has significant implications for both the basic living conditions of the Afghan populations and the protection environment.

EDUCATION

A substantial investment of **$1.5M** is vital to **provide educational opportunities for 22,520 secondary school-aged students**. This funding will enable them to access formal education, breaking down barriers to learning in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

$1.7M needed to empower **221,756 teachers through comprehensive training programs** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

FOOD SECURITY

$2.2M needed to provide **in-kind food assistance to 78,300 individuals**, ensuring they can meet the basic food needs of their families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

$1.8M required to support **87,550 individuals through Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)** aimed at enhancing food security. This approach empowers recipients to make choices based on the local markets and their specific family needs

HEALTH

$2.6M is required for the construction and rehabilitation of **248 health facilities**. These facilities play a pivotal role in providing essential medical services to those in need in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Balochistan provinces.

NUTRITION

$853K required to **treat 48,176 moderately acutely malnourished boys and girls aged 6-59 months** through the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan provinces

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

$3M Supporting livelihoods is a key component of recovery efforts, and almost USD 3million is earmarked for **providing crop inputs, including seeds and fertilizers**, as well as **kitchen gardening assistance** to 106,695 individuals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

$2M required for **the training of 21,070 individuals in entrepreneurial skills and income generation activities**, paving the way for economic empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

PROTECTION

$1.1M

required to provide crucial **legal assistance.** This funding will **enable 37,416 individuals to access the legal support** they need, ensuring their rights and well-being are protected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

$440K

is critically needed to ensure the well-being of **36,091 women and girls.** This funding will establish safe and welcoming spaces, known as **Women/Girls Friendly Spaces**, offering protection and support in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

$439K

is indispensable to address the pressing **needs of children at heightened risk**. This funding will support **4,452 newly identified children** through the implementation of Best Interests Procedures (BIP) and Child Protection Case Management in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

$343K

is required **to assist 2,930 Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC)**. The support includes family tracing, case management, and the provision of family-based care or suitable alternatives, ensuring the well-being of these vulnerable children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

Furthermore **$1.5M** will provide **dignity kits to 21,945 individuals**. These kits not only meet immediate needs but also restore a sense of dignity and self-worth, **for vulnerable women** who would otherwise not be in a position to buy these items in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

SHELTER & NFIs

$12.7M

required to provide **core relief items, including winterization assistance**, to 46,326 households. This support helps vulnerable families during weather harsh conditions in particular in the mountainous regions where winter comes early in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan provinces

$650K

required to reach 241,286 people residing in urban settlements, refugee villages, and hosting communities. This will involve the **installation of new latrines and the rehabilitation and improvement of existing toilets, promoting hygiene** and **sanitation** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

$17.9M

required to **ensure access to clean water and sanitation** to cover **1,474,158 individuals** through the installation of new water supply systems and the rehabilitation and improvement of existing water supplies sanitation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

$650K

required to reach 241,286 people residing in urban settlements, refugee villages, and hosting communities. This will involve the **installation of new latrines and the rehabilitation and improvement of existing toilets, promoting hygiene** and **sanitation** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

Uzbekistan, Termez Cargo Center © UNHCR/Elyor Nemat

Central Asia

13.2K individuals reached

27.3K estimated total Afghan population***

19.1K new arrivals since 2021

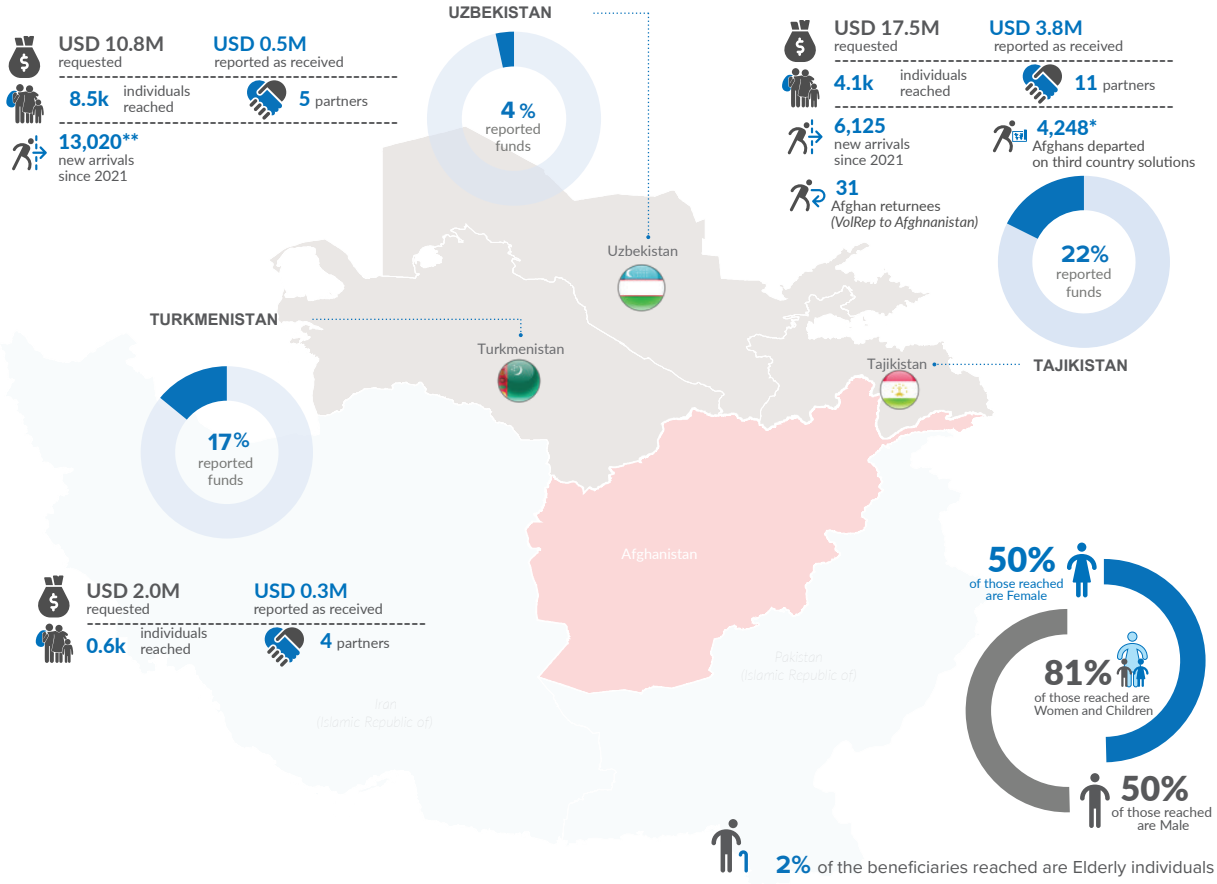
31 Afghan returnees in 2023

16% Reported funds

USD30.3M Funds required

USD4.7M Funds received

11 partners



Note :

* 4,199 to Canada through the Canadian sponsorship programme, and 49 to the USA through Government-assisted Resettlement

** According to Government of Uzbekistan sources, some 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021. The majority arrived before August 15 with valid visas issued by the Uzbek consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif.

*** Central Asia estimated total Afghan population includes: 13,020 Afghan citizens arrived in the country since January 2021 according to the Government of Uzbekistan; 9,220 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Tajikistan (source: UNHCR); and some 5,000 Afghan nationals who have lived in scattered communities in Turkmenistan since the 1990s (source: RRP 2023).

Disclaimer :
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Tajikistan

Achievement Overview

Actual *Annual Target* *Above Target*

EDUCATION

1,455 children (including Afghan refugees, Afghans of other status and members of the host community) supported to access **primary** (1,294 children) & **secondary** (161 children) **education**

EDU1	22%	5,935
EDU2	3%	5,935

41 Afghan students supported to access **tertiary education**

EDU3	91%	45

PROTECTION

310 persons accessed **feedback and response mechanisms** (calls to hotline, messages to mailbox, or in-person approach)

PRO4	6%	5,000

15 trainings conducted on **Humanitarian Border Management** to national entities

PRO5	63%	24

931 legal assistance activities conducted

PRO11	47%	2,000

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

621 Afghans supported to access **secondary and tertiary healthcare services**

HN1	1%	42,600

CBI

162 individuals received **CBI** for health and nutrition purposes

HN4	65%	250

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

3,091 individuals supported with business grants, cash for work, or in-kind **support to establish their own businesses**

LR1.1	1,240	249%	

57 of individuals benefiting from **vocational training**

LR1.2	11%	1,265

LOGISTICS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1 **warehouse** maintained for safe storage of relief items in Termez, Uzbekistan

LT1	1

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

CBI

175 individuals received **CBI** for shelter/NFI purposes

SNFI1	2%	9,450

Situation Overview

In 2023, UNHCR continued to engage with the Government of Tajikistan and other RRP partners to advance the provision of protection, assistance, and support to Afghan refugees while working towards their long-term well-being and self-reliance. **One of the key priorities in Tajikistan has been enhancing government counterparts' capacity in anticipation of a possible influx**. UNHCR worked jointly with the Government COES (Committee on Emergency Situation) to plan a SIMEX exercise, whereby a simulation of a refugee influx and its management by the Government was tested practically. UNHCR also held two protection working group meetings to identify priorities of intervention and reception of refugees and asylum seekers. Registration of 50 new arrivals has been conducted jointly with Government partners (RCVC and Inson va Adolat) to stregthen their management of influx and emergency delivery of assistance. UNHCR also worked in mobilizing partners to engage with and support the Government. UNHCR is working in enhancing the technical capacity of the Department of Citizenship and Work with Refugees (DCWR) in operationalizing its database (digital processing, ICAO compliant documentation issuance) which already holds 6,000 records of refugees and asylum seekers. Efforts were also made to promote the socioeconomic integration of Afghan refugees into host communities by scaling up livelihood opportunities, vocational training, and access to income-generating activities. These initiatives – which have a special focus on women and girls – are aimed at bolstering refugees' self-reliance and contribution to the local economy as well as fostering social cohesion between Afghan refugees and the Tajik host community.

Although promising steps were made in Tajikistan, several challenges remain. Ongoing insecurity in Afghanistan places continues to place strain on resources and requires ongoing coordination and support from the international community. Access to territory continues to be a challenge and is limited to those only with a valid visa and passport. The following challenges are also of concern: delay in the backlog of asylum applications at Government entity level; a fragile economic situation which impacts refugee access to the labour market (returning Tajik migrant workers, referenced in IOM and World Bank reports); shrinking donor funding with competing emergencies at global level.

Government Response

The Tajik government remains committed to its international obligations and provides access to education, healthcare, employment and other basic services to refugees and asylum-seekers. In 2023, UNHCR continued to advocate for the inclusion of eligible refugees to the National Social Protection System and was proactively engaged in the development of a three-year Plan of Action 2023 – 2025 to implement the newly adopted Nation Social Protection Strategy until 2040.

Following the recognition of the textile sector by the Government of Tajikistan as a priority area with potential to grow and generate jobs, UNHCR Tajikistan, with support from the Ministry of Industry and UNIDO, stepped up its engagement with the private sector to identify opportunities that support inclusion of refugees into this specific industry. In 2023, UNHCR signed an agreement with Nohid – a leading textile company – to set up a sewing workshop in Vadhat, the largest refugee hosting city in the country. Currently, 13 refugees and five local artisans benefit from this scheme. In addition, UNHCR, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies and the private sector, launched an exclusive initiative offering 12 Afghan refugee designers a chance to produce and showcase a fashion show for the 10th season of the Tajikistan Fashion Week.

Despite these promising steps, the Tajik government continues to face several challenges responding to Afghans' needs. These challenges include limited financial resources, lack of adequate infrastructure to support refugees' needs, potential security risks associated with the influx of refugees, and host community's limited infrastructural capacity to host refugees. More humanitarian and development support is needed to address these gaps.

Key Interagency programmes

PROTECTION

In 2023, UNICEF established a court room in Hisor City. 22 judges and court employees (four women) from Hisor City and other areas (where Afghan refugees reside) were trained on the application of child friendly procedures for children in contact with the law.

UNICEF continued its work to protect children, especially girls, from sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and neglect through policy reform advocacy. Under the joint UN-EU Spotlight Initiative, amendments were made to the Family Code, Law on Appeals and Law on Child Rights and are under government review. In addition to policy work, UNICEF continued working with schools to roll out reporting mechanisms for school children, particularly girls, to tackle violence against children and sexual and gender-based violence. The number of schools with these reporting mechanisms increased from 45 in 2022 to 347 schools in 2023.

UNICEF also conducted a two-day workshop for 125 service providers and case managers, including local authorities and community leaders, on working with vulnerable children and their caregivers. Topics covered the practical aspects of bolstering inter-agency work at the local level to identify and refer vulnerable cases to relevant services, child rights, and the importance of a safe and protective family environment. The project also launched basic psychosocial and emotional support for children, adolescents and their caregivers. Following this, 300 recipients received basic psychosocial assistance.

Representatives of humanitarian and development partners gather in front of a RHU during the day 2 of SIMEX, in order to conduct a debriefing. ©UNHCR/Muhammadkhuja Davlyatov

Moreover, to enhance the Government of Tajikistan's capacity to address the short- and medium-term needs of Afghan refugees, the World Bank (via its implementing partner NSIFT) worked closely with UNHCR to implement a project aimed at strengthening the protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers in Tajikistan. The project serves as a vehicle to share the burden with the Government in expanding protection space, promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence while enhancing refugees' socio-economic inclusion in Tajikistan.

LIVELIHOOD

In 2023, UNDP held vocational workshops for 77 residents aimed at improving income and job opportunities of communities living around Tajik-Afghan border areas. Eight economic infrastructure facilities were also set up including: establishment of workshop for rice processing and wheat flour in Jamoat Vatan of Farkhor district; Rehabilitation of 100 hectare pomegranate garden in Shamsiddin Shohin district; establishment of a workshop for production of compound feed for cattle in Shaartuz district; establishment of Almond and nuts processing and packaging workshops in Qubodiyon district; establishment of a Corn stick production line in Jayhun district; establishment of automatic poultry farm in Panj district; establishment of a workshop for production of dried fish in Shaartuz district; establishment of a workshop for macaroni production in techno park of Panj district

UN Women continued to implement two two-year projects which seek to increase Afghan women and girls' participation in economic activities and enhance the social cohesion and integration of refugees more generally. In 2023, several two-day business skills workshops on financial literacy were held, reaching 150 refugee women living in Rudaki and Vahdat districts. In addition, an information session was conducted for 36 refugee women in Vahdat on their employment rights and how to apply for apprenticeship and employment opportunities. A series of roundtables on negotiation and conflict management were also held in Rudaki, Vahdat districts and Khujand, reaching 95 participants.

Consequences of Underfunding

EDUCATION

$40K

required to support **1,400 individuals** including **primary / secondary school-aged children education**. Limited opportunities are available for refugees and asylum seeker students due to financial constraints. UNHCR plans to increase the number of primary and secondary level students benefiting from education support.

HEALTH & NUTRITION

$80K

required to guarantee **access to treatment and medical support** for 1,600 individuals. Refugees and asylum seekers face challenges in terms of health coverage, some having serious medical issues that needs urgent attention. Multi-purpose cash assistance needs to be extended to reach more families.

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

$120K

required to support some 1,300 individuals targeted for economic inclusion through enhanced **livelihoods and self-reliance** (vocational /skills learning opportunities for refugees; apprenticeship, private sector partnership)

PROTECTION

$150K

required to provide **technical support to Government**, like protection related trainings, processing equipment (electronic /computer), rehabilitation and infrastructure (reception facilities, temporary accommodation).

INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

$80K

required to **improve public spaces** used by refugees and members of the host community - schools, hospitals, playgrounds and provision of equipment to reinforce infrastructure capacity. Host community support has been overlooked because of shortage of funds and it is important to also support infrastructure for communities, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

Turkmenistan

Achievement Overview

Actual *Annual Target* *Above Target*

PROTECTION

2 GBV hotlines operated

16 individuals were covered by **protection activities**

PRO5 | 16 individuals | 1,300

3 trainings on **GBV prevention** provided to national entities (550 personnel from police and social services)

PRO7.1 | 60% | 5

5 service providers capacitated on **GBV prevention**

PRO7.2 | 3 | 5

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

50 individuals benefiting from **vocational training**

LR1.2 | 50% | 100

MULTI PURPOSE CASH

2 vulnerable mandate Afghan refugee households (5 individuals) reached with **cash based interventions** (CBI)

Situation Overview

Turkmenistan remains closed to Afghan citizens who do not have a valid passport with business, education, or diplomatic visas. Ensuring unhindered access to territory and quality asylum procedures, including adequate referral mechanisms, for refugees remain priorities for RRP partners in Turkmenistan in 2023. Afghan nationals in Turkmenistan without legal status continued to experience problems accessing employment, healthcare, education, and other social services. Despite these challenges, and in view of the ongoing situation in Afghanistan and their length of stay in Turkmenistan, many Afghans are unable or unwilling to return and still have humanitarian needs, mostly linked to their legal status as non-citizens.

In 2023, the assumption remains that in case of further refugee movements, only authorities and the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan would have access to the displaced populations in the early stages. As such, RRP partners continue to focus on consolidating partnerships with these partners to support emergency preparedness and multi-sectoral humanitarian responses.

Together with national organizations, RRP partners continue to bring the necessary technical expertise, implementation capacities and resources to raise awareness and respond to a potential refugee emergency. Given that there has been no refugee influx into Turkmenistan, partners have not received any direct funding for the 2023 RRP. However, preparedness activities continue to be implemented by partners via regular budgets, including from softly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

Government Response

The Government of Turkmenistan continues to maintain an annual workplan with UNHCR, outlining shared activities to be undertaken throughout the year to protect and promote the rights of people forced to flee. The workplan includes capacity building initiatives for local executive bodies, development of joint proposals to improve legislation related to refugee rights, capacity building of competent government authorities on emergency preparedness and response in case of mass influx of refugees, and other related activities. An information session was delivered with the Office of the Ombudsperson in Ashgabat on national and international refugee protection standards in alignment with the Refugee Convention. Turkmenistan is also working with UNICEF to strengthen national and local emergency preparedness and response capacities to natural disasters and climate resilience across its programmes.

Key Interagency programmes

PROTECTION

UNHCR continues to work with the government to legalise the stay of nine remaining mandate refugees from Afghanistan – all of whom have lived in the country for over 25 years. Without legal status, mandate refugees have no access to social protection, education, health care or legal employment. In tandem, RRP partners continued to advocate with the government to find durable solutions for this group via naturalization or by granting residence permits.

UNHCR provided multi-purpose cash grants to two vulnerable mandate refugee families (five individuals) to help cover their basic needs during the reporting period.

WASH

UNICEF continues to focus on WASH in emergencies in schools to ensure they are equipped with required knowledge and skills ensuring a clean, safe and enabling education environment. Training sessions were delivered to 1,043 schoolchildren between 16 and 17 years old, and 207 school administrators and teachers, across 10 schools in Ashgabat city, and Ahal, Dashoguz and Lebap regions.

Uzbekistan

Achievement Overview

Actual *Annual Target* *Above Target*

EDUCATION

215 children (including Afghan refugees, Afghans of other status and members of the host community) supported to access **primary** (**119** children) & **secondary** (**96** children) education

EDU1	2%	6,050
EDU2	1%	17,500

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

404 Afghans supported to access **secondary** and **tertiary** healthcare services

HN1	4%	10,000

1 health facility supported with equipment, medicines and medical supplies, salaries

HN3		100%

2 maternities supported to implement NMCR methodology

HN6	67%	3

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

891 individuals benefited from **vocational training**

LR1	5%	17,760

MULTI PURPOSE CASH

CBI

3 individuals received **Multi Purpose Cash Assistance** (unconditional)

MPC1	3 individuals	1,477

PROTECTION

624 persons accessed **feedback and response mechanisms** (calls to hotline, messages to mailbox, or in-person approach)

PRO4	5%	11,700

4,895 children were provided with protection services

PRO6.1		3,500	140%

174 professionals trained on child protection support and standards

PRO6.2	13%	1,300

781 children reached with information on available child protection services

PRO6.3	2%	35,250

2 trainings on GBV prevention provided

PRO7.1	50%	4

145 individuals benefitted from trainings on GBV prevention provided

PRO7.2	73%	200

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

6 renovated handwashing facilities

WASH3.1	38%	16

349 people were trained on WASH health care providers and school teachers

WASH3.2	8	349

Situation Overview

In 2023, UNHCR continued to drive inter-agency efforts to protect and assist Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan, in collaboration with the UN Country Team. Under the overall leadership of UNHCR, RRP partners convened regularly to discuss the latest developments regarding protection of Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan and possible solutions, as well as refer urgent cases for follow-up by the government or other partners. Where possible, RRP partners combined efforts on areas where they have the greatest operational impact based on their respective expertise and experience.

Government Response

Uzbekistan is not yet party to the Refugee Convention or its Protocol and does not yet have a functional national asylum system. The only existing legal avenue is the 2017 Presidential Decree on Political Asylum, however refugees who have tried to apply through this process inform RRP partners of being unable to lodge applications.

Restrictions introduced in August 2021 limiting entry to only Afghan citizens with valid business, education, or diplomatic visas, remained in place for the first half of the year. Without a valid passport and business, education, or diplomatic visa, Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan are formally and informally excluded from social protection, education, healthcare, and legal employment. Visa renewal remains a significant problem because of its high cost. Afghans who run out of passport pages, or turn 16 and therefore need a new visa, are required to leave the country. Refugee children born in Uzbekistan cannot obtain passports.

In response, UN and RRP partners continued to advocate for safe and unhindered access to territory, and sustainable and systemic solutions to enable Afghans to legalise their stay and access essential rights and services, while providing the most vulnerable groups with urgent humanitarian assistance.

Uzbekistan. NGO working with Afghan refugees UNHCR in partnership with NGO Barqaror Hayot implement a 6-month pilot project in Termez that seeks to improve the skills of Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan and the host community – helping to fill national shortfall in human capital – enable individuals to achieve higher qualifications in new areas, and support groups to recover and rebuild. As part of the project trainings on cooking, sewing, hairdressing are organised as well as and language classes for children. © UNHCR/Elyor Nemat

Key Interagency programmes

PROTECTION

In 2023, UNHCR, at the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, undertook an exercise comparing national legislation related to refugee issues with international standards to identify gaps and best practices. This is part of ongoing efforts to support the country's considerations to accede to the Refugee Convention and develop a Refugee Law and guide future legislative changes and development of the national protection framework.

UNICEF conducted workshops in three districts in Surkhandarya and trained 174 professionals on how to provide psychosocial support and legal aid to Afghan and host communities. UNICEF also provided 60 Afghan families legal assistance and referred them to relevant agencies and authorities for support.

UNFPA delivered capacity-building sessions for 145 female religious leaders and mahalla (local community) activists on promoting women's rights, reproductive health, gender equality and GBV prevention in Surkhandarya region's Sarasiyo and Kumkurg'on districts.

SHELTER/NFI

UNHCR provided multi-purpose cash grants to three vulnerable mandate refugee families to cover urgent basic needs.

LIVELIHOODS

UNHCR and UNDP partnered on a climate action and sustainability cash-for-work project that engaged Afghans and vulnerable people from host communities in afforestation activities. Implemented in Surkhandarya region, the project sought to enhance the resilience of local communities while addressing the damaging impact of dust storms on the population and economy. 413 Afghans and 337 people from the host community benefited from this initiative.

IOM piloted a small infrastructure rehabilitation and business development project for Afghan families in Surkhandarya. So far, 15 women have launched various profitable small businesses in printing, sewing or shoe making.

Starting in 2022, UNHCR implemented a vocational training project in Surkhandarya region, providing courses on hairdressing, manicure, sewing or confectionary to Afghan citizens and members of the host community. In 2023, 65 Afghan women and 23 women from the host community have completed the courses. As part of the same initiative, 43 Afghan (22 girls, 21 boys) and 5 Uzbek (3 girls, 2 boys) children completed 3-month Uzbek, Russian and English language courses. Additionally, 18 women (16 Afghan citizens and 2 Uzbek) took part in trainings on gender-based violence and conflict resolution, and 79 Afghan citizens (73 women and 6 men) and 23 women from the host community received social counselling. Due to lack of funding, the project was discontinued from 01 June.

UNHCR and UNDP are partnering on a climate action and sustainability project that engages Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan and vulnerable people from host communities in afforestation activities through cash-for-work.
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EDUCATION

UNICEF supported the enrolment of 215 Afghan children in Uzbek schools and donated various school supplies, including 700 children's books.

WASH

UNICEF constructed climate-resilient WASH facilities in one District Hospital and five primary health care facilities in Termez district. 79,200 people from the Afghan and host community, including 22,862 women and 11,322 children under five years old, benefitted from improved WASH and primary health services.

HEALTH & NUTRITION

UNFPA and the Tashkent Medical Academy conducted an online learning course for 25 teachers on antenatal care and HIV prevention, diagnostic, treatment, and counselling.

Consequences of Underfunding

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

$144K

required to support **150 Afghans** and vulnerable people from the host community with **vocational training courses** on hairdressing and cosmetology, tailoring or confectionary making, 20 people with business initiatives, 90 children with language courses (Uzbek, Russian and English), as well as 490 people with psychosocial counselling in Surkhandarya region.

$426K

required to support 700 people (420 Afghans and 280 Uzbek) in Surkhandarya via a **cash-for-work** scheme focused on afforestation activities. Not only will this scheme be critical to enhancing their self-reliance and resilience, it will also help mitigate the damaging impact of dust storms on the population and the economy

PROTECTION

$200K

required to support the provision of **child protection and child-friendly and gender-sensitive legal aid** for Afghan children and families

$500K

CBI

required to provide **emergency assistance** to households who cannot afford necessities.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

$300K

required to bolster **health services** for at least 150 Afghan citizens and vulnerable people from the host community via the construction or **rehabilitation of WASH facilities** in 10 primary health care facilities, ensuring access to quality drinking water, proper hygiene, sanitation, and infection prevention measures

EDUCATION

$200K

required for secondary education financing to ensure that at least **80 Afghan students** can continue their studies safely in Uzbekistan

Funding and Partnership

Primary school-aged children supported to access formal education
© UNICEF Pakistan

The work of RRP partners would not have been possible without the extremely generous support of donors. As of end September 2023, the RRP 2023 response was 28 per cent funded across the region with USD 173.6 million received of USD 613 million requirements. However, this represents a drop in the funding percentage compared to 2021 and 2022 when the response was 58 per cent and 52 per cent funded respectively. With a variety of other emergencies developing globally, there is a risk of fatigue in the donor community. As is clear from this plan, the needs across the region are huge and are the situation of vulnerable Afghan populations has worsened due to external regional and global factors. Their host communities, who have welcomed Afghans for over four decades, also require significant support, particularly to bolster the public infrastructure which serves Afghans and host communities alike.

RRP partners reiterate the message on the importance of flexible funding, which allows partners to prioritize the most pressing needs across the region, as well as multi-year funding, which facilitates a more predictable response. Both of these were important commitments by donors as part of the Grand Bargain and remain integral to the humanitarian response for the Afghanistan Situation.

Further information on funding levels of the response is available on the **Refugee Funding Tracker** which tracks interagency funding for the response. This was rolled out in 2021 and its usage has increased since then. It was the first time it had been used in these countries. Given that the response has increased its partnership significantly from 40 partners in 2022 to 65 partners in 2023, further guidance has been provided at country level on the use of the RFT to ensure that funding tracking is as up to date as possible.

RRP Partners gratefully acknowledge government donors, private donors, charities, and other organizations for their valuable contributions to RRP 2023 through earmarked funding as well as flexible funding at a global, regional, or sub regional level which has contributed to the response. RRP partners acknowledge the huge generosity of host countries for their continued hosting of Afghans over several decades. These countries must be supported through even greater responsibility sharing by the international community, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

RRP 2023 donors: Australia | Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | CERF | Czechia | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Kuwait | Luxembourg | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Poland | Private Donors | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Slovakia | Slovenia | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

Regional Refugee Response Plan For Afghanistan Situation

Midyear Report 2023