



Regional Refugee Response Plan
for Afghanistan Situation
2024



Regional Refugee Response Plan for Afghanistan Situation

Midyear Report 2024



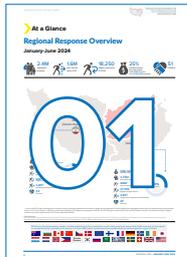


Cover Photograph:

An Afghan refugee child using UNHCR-provided solar lanterns to study. Khyber Pakhrunkhwa, Pakistan. © UNHCR/Mercury Transformations.



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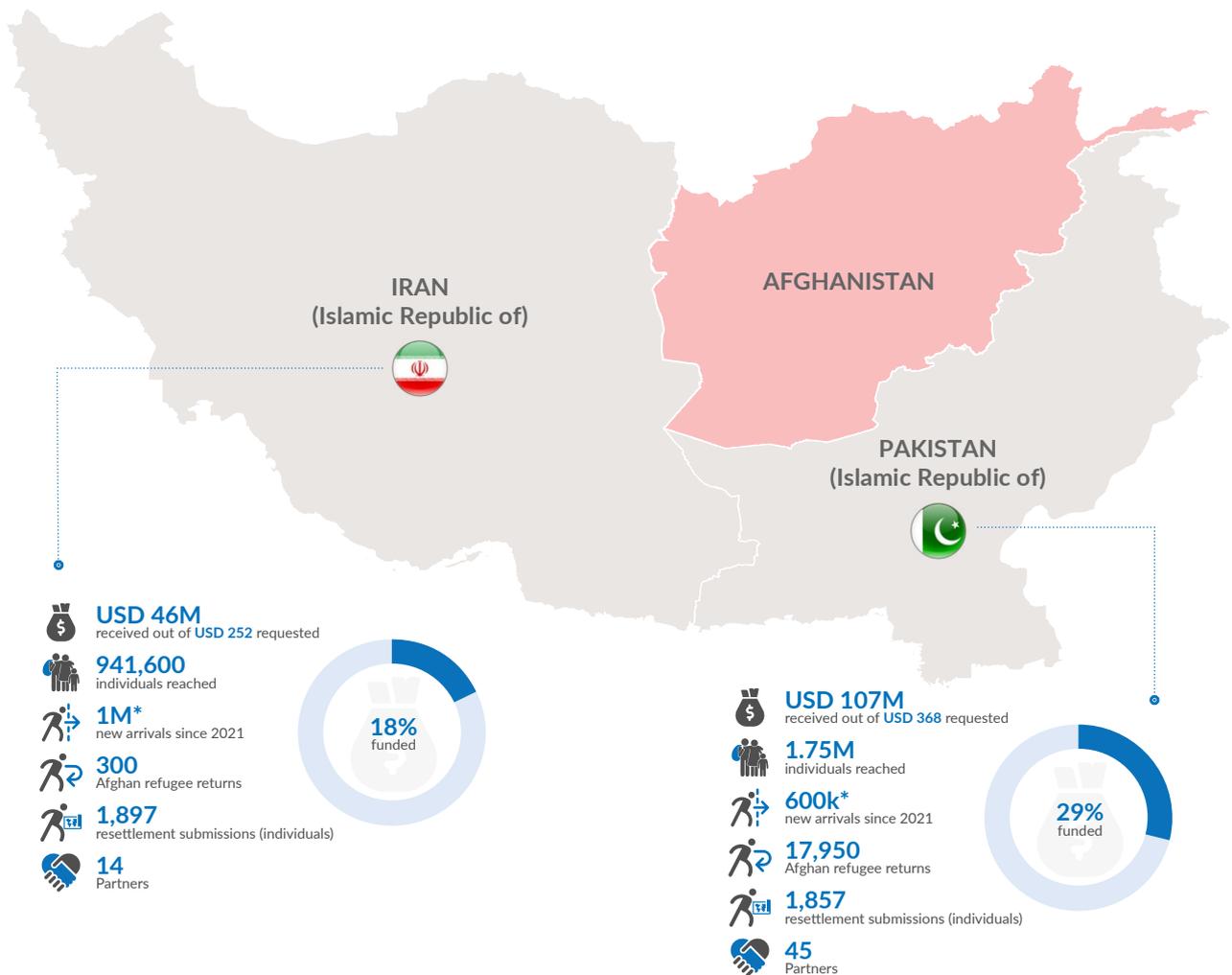
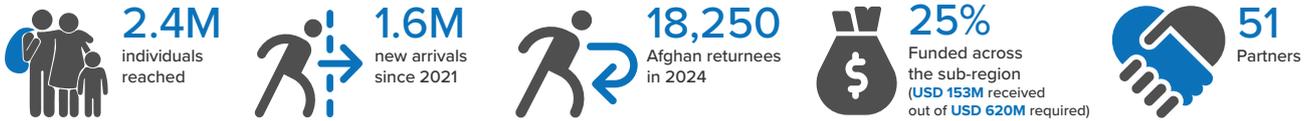


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At a Glance

Regional Response Overview

January-June 2024



* 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 91,950 Afghans have approached UNHCR. The 600,000 figure reported by the Government of Pakistan is based in the inflow and outflow of Afghan nationals, out of which approximately 476,000 have approached UNHCR.

Map 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.





Regional Situation Overview

In 2024, the humanitarian and human rights situation inside Afghanistan continued to deteriorate. A non-return advisory remains in place, pending observance of international human rights norms and standards essential for sustainable and dignified return. Nonetheless, over 156,000 Afghans have returned to the country during the first half of the year from Pakistan. Housing, access to finance, and food assistance, together with the provision of essential documentation and protection services for children, women and girls constitute the principal needs upon arrival to final destinations in Afghanistan. Fostering new economic opportunities for refugees and host communities remains essential for sustainable return, through investments in entrepreneurship, improving market access, and access to Sharia-compliant microfinance.

The situation for Afghans in the neighbouring host countries has become increasingly challenging, with economic fragility reducing livelihoods opportunities, a spiralling cost of living crisis, and rising instances of xenophobia. Since 2021, over 1.6 million Afghans have sought safety and protection in Iran and Pakistan, adding a significant additional burden to the two host countries which now host over 8 million Afghans. As Afghans become the largest refugee population globally this year, surpassing Syrian nationals, the principal host countries who have hosted Afghans for decades need to be adequately supported. The sub-region needs continued and increased assistance in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, with a population of at least 3.8 million refugees and refugee-like individuals, including over 1 million who arrived since 2021. While limitations in State service delivery have become more acute, Iran has continued to extend its inclusive health and education policies to all 4.5 million Afghans residing in the country and is issuing Smart ID Cards to the head counted population, providing regularized documentation, and facilitated access to services. Equally, reflective of a contracting economic situation and tensions between refugees and the host community on perceived labour market competition, up to 418,000 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan – with an estimated 30 percent subsequently re-entering Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan hosts some 1.3 million Afghan refugees and over 1.5 million Afghans of other status. Pakistan's long-standing and commendable tradition of hospitality toward those in need of asylum was challenged in 2023 by the government's implementation of the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan" (IFRP), which sought to repatriate over one million foreign nationals without valid documents. Since the roll-out of the IFRP, some 647,000 Afghans, mostly those undocumented, returned to Afghanistan as a result of pressure and fearing arrest as at the end of June 2024. Numbers of returns in 2024 have significantly decreased, following a pause in the roll-out of the IFRP. RRP partners continue to highlight the risk of involuntary returns from Pakistan and Iran. Women and girls, journalists, musicians, artists, and ethnic minorities, in view of the human rights situation in Afghanistan, are particularly at risk.

There is a small window of opportunity to ensure that neighbouring host countries are adequately supported to continue hosting millions of Afghans. The alternatives include the continued destabilization of displaced populations and a risk of onward movements as the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Afghanistan continues. In support of protection, resilience, and solutions, RRP partners continue to work through government systems wherever possible, supporting national authorities' efforts to maintain and strengthen those systems in the spirit of responsibility sharing. A total of 51 partners (13 UN agencies, 19 INGOs, and 19 local civil society organizations) with budgetary requirements of USD 620.4m this year, aim to reach a total population 7.3m, including refugees and their host communities. At mid-year, funding stood at USD 153m, constituting 25% of overall needs.



Regional Achievements by Sector

■ Actual ■ Annual Target



EDUCATION

89,200 children (Afghan refugees and of other statuses and members of host community) supported to access **primary** (66,800) & **secondary** (22,400) **education**



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



FOOD SECURITY

38,100 individuals receiving **in-kind food assistance**



30,700 receiving monthly **cash assistance** for food security



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

287,400 Afghans have been supported to **access healthcare services**



11 health facilities have been **constructed** or **rehabilitated**



10 health facilities have been supported with **equipment, medicines and medical supplies or salaries**



LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

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



610 individuals benefited from **vocational training**





■ Actual ■ Annual Target



PROTECTION

669 newly identified children at heightened risk supported by a Best Interests Procedure



60,000 individuals provided with counselling on registration, documentation & international protection



40,000 individuals have received legal assistance



SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

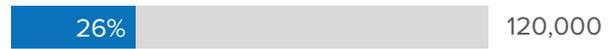
18,700 individuals receiving **non-food items / core relief items**



700 receiving **cash assistance** for shelter/NFI purposes

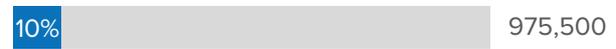


31,500 receiving **Multi Purpose Cash Assistance** (unconditional)

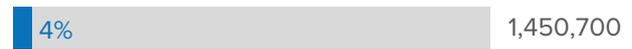


WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

102,400 individuals received **hygienic supplies**

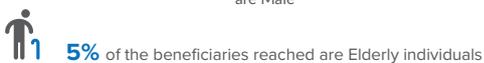
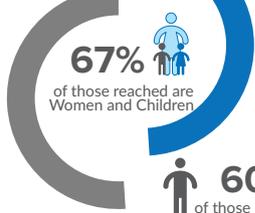
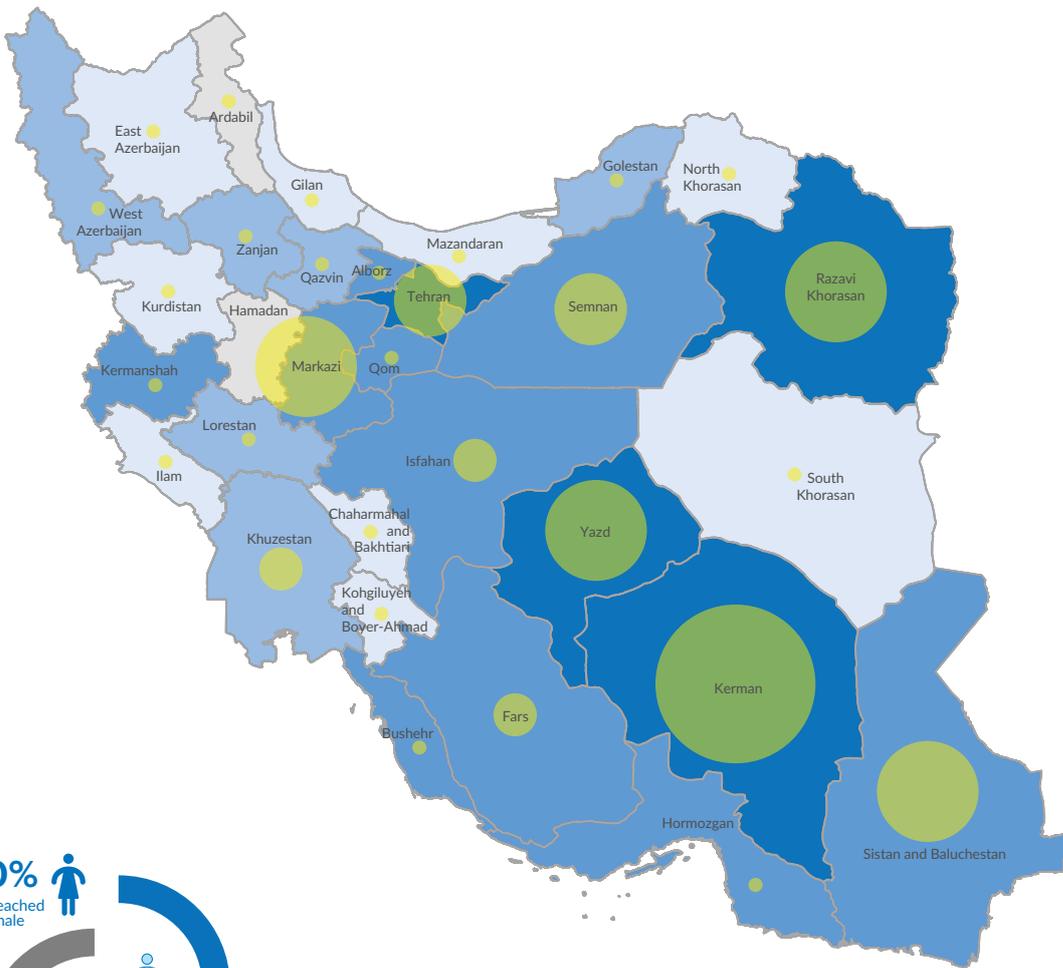
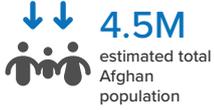


54,100 reached through **installation or rehabilitation or improvement of the water supply system**



Iran (Islamic Republic of)

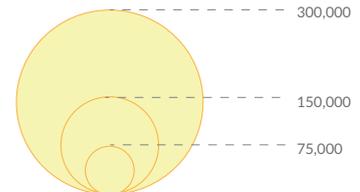
An Afghan refugee girl waiting for classes to start in Ansar school in Semnan refugee settlement, Semnan, Iran © UNHCR/Hossein Eidizadeh



Partner Presence**



Beneficiaries



Note:

* 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 91,950 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.

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

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Achievement Overview

Actual Annual Target



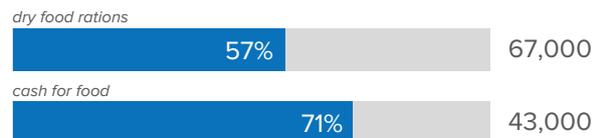
EDUCATION

17,000 children (Afghan refugees and of other statuses and members of host community) supported to access **primary** (12,600) & **secondary** (4,400) **education**



FOOD SECURITY

38,100 individuals receiving **monthly dry food rations** and **30,700** receiving **monthly cash for food**



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

70,200 Afghans have been supported to through Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI), **7** health facilities supported with **equipment, medicines and medical supplies or salaries**



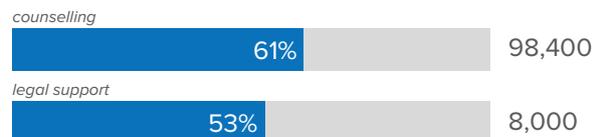
LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

44 individuals supported with business grants, cash for work, or in-kind **support to establish their own businesses** and **610** individuals benefited from **vocational training**



PROTECTION

60,000 individuals provided with counselling on registration, documentation & international protection, and **4,200** have received legal support



SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

17,900 individuals receiving **NFI kits**, and **31,500** receiving **Multi Purpose Cash Assistance** (unconditional)



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

53,800 individuals received **hygienic supplies**, and **1,700** reached through **installation or rehabilitation of the water supply**





Situation Overview

In 2024, some 3.8 million people are recognized as refugees or persons in refugee-like situation in Iran, making Iran the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, according to UNHCR Global Trend Report published in June 2024. The country continues to face innumerable challenges to meet the protection and humanitarian needs of this displaced population. The RRP is funded only at 18% of the required budget (USD 46 million against overall needs of 252 million), resulting in reduced access to protection and essential services, in particular for the most vulnerable.

Access to protection and essential services has been largely governed by their documentation status through several new government-led schemes. In May 2023, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced plans to issue a new unified smart ID card to consolidate the various forms of documentation held by foreign nationals in Iran, aiming to replace Amayesh cards for long-stay Afghans, *Hoviat* cards for Iraqi refugees, 2022 headcount slips, special residence permits and family passports, with gradual access to banking, judicial, and administrative services and SIM cards. The smart cards started to be issued early 2024. By the end of June, a number of those who had been registered for Smart Governance Scheme has yet to receive the card. Access to services has been limited for undocumented Afghans. In addition, Government has taken more restrictive policies on undocumented Afghans.

In January 2024, another newly-established scheme called the Management of Immigrants and Foreign National's Micro and Macro Financial Resources in the Supply Chain (hereinafter the Financial Scheme) was introduced. According to the National Organization for Migration (NOM), the scheme aims to create a safe environment for investment for foreign nationals, calling for voluntary financial deposit from foreigners to enable access to various governmental and infrastructural services. The rights associated with the "foreign investor" status remains the most complex, with clarification sought on the voluntary nature of the scheme, and effective access to services. It is paramount to continue addressing the complex protection needs of the majority of Afghan forcibly displaced population.

Opportunities for long-term solutions for Afghan refugees and those in refugee-like situation remains limited. In reference to UNHCR's Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan (Update I), the situation in Afghanistan continues to be characterized by human rights violations and obstacles to the full enjoyment of essential rights and services. As a result, population movement from Afghanistan to Iran continues for those seeking international protection, and those engaged in onward movements.

Against the global and national backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated in Iran by currency depreciation, opportunities to enhance the self-reliance of Afghans has been limited. However, consistent with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) objectives, the RRP seeks to strengthen the resilience of Afghans in Iran and to safeguard continued inclusive access to services for all, pending a durable solution to this protracted forced displacement crisis.

Government Response

In 2024, Iran maintained its inclusive policies by continuing to allow Afghans to access to education, primary health care, safe water, sanitation, and hygiene 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.

A decree issued in May 2015 by Iran's Supreme Leader entitles all Afghan children of school age to attend primary and secondary education regardless of their documentation situation. However, barriers to equal access



to education have been increasingly established under the pretext of space limitation and lack of facilities to accommodate the large number of Afghan refugees in Iran. Foreign national students especially undocumented children still face significant challenges on school enrollment. Many schools have no enrolment capacity due to delayed instructions, leading to referrals to afternoon shifts, private schools, or remote locations. 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 equitable asylum system or other temporary stay arrangements to regularize their status in the country. Undocumented Afghans in Iran continued to be in situations of vulnerability and at risk of deportation, exploitation, and other harmful situations while facing barriers to access services, including education.

Equally, the adoption and enforcement of the Law on Protection of Children and Adolescents (2020) represented a crucial advancement in promoting child protection measures in Iran. The Law recognizes children in situations of displacement, migration, being a refugee, or statelessness, as children at risk and in need of protection by the government. Moreover, its Executive By Law calls for equal treatment of children, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, and nationality.

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. The Government continues to publicly call for international responsibility and burden sharing. In line with the SSAR and GCR, greater responsibility-sharing is needed to support Iran in maintaining their progressive policies, including through support to RRP partner programmes.

Key Interagency programmes

PROTECTION

By the end of June 2024, Protection Sector partners provided some 23,000 individuals with counselling services to provide general information about access to assistance and services. The sector partners also assisted some 36,000 individuals with counselling specific to documentation issues, enrolment for solutions, or protection sensitive queries. Individual counselling sessions continue to be the basis for identification of specific protection needs and referral for further specialized assistance. It also serves as a platform to continuously understand needs and risks

faced by the forcibly displaced population as a part of a feedback and complaint mechanism, which eventually informs the humanitarian partners for better protection programming.

Through counselling sessions, 497 individuals with heightened protection concerns were identified and received case management support from UNHCR including via Best Interest Procedures for children; many individuals were also referred for detailed assessment to receive multipurpose cash assistance.



Refugees receiving psycho-social counselling at Field Office Tehran, Iran
© Hossein Eidizadeh, UNHCR



Young Afghan refugee receiving child protection counselling at Field Office Tehran, Iran © Hossein Eidizadeh, UNHCR

In response to the protracted Afghan refugee crisis and existing barriers impeding Afghan children's access to protection services, UNICEF, in partnership with RI and NRC continued to provide child protection services in Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) within refugee settlements. During the reporting period, a total of 1,608 Afghan children received services in CFS in Torbat-e-Jam and Maybod settlements facilitated by RI and UNICEF. Additionally, 167 mothers participated in a series of trainings on parenting and life skills. These services will also be extended to Afghan communities in the densely populated areas of Khorasan Razavi and Kerman provinces in eastern Iran by NRC and UNICEF. Meanwhile, the process of identifying and registering children for psychosocial support is ongoing.

UNHCR and RI provided some 1,900 individuals with psychosocial counselling to address the concern

related to anxiety, depression, suicidal intentions, or other signs of severe mental distress. UNHCR continues to operate a legal services project in Iran that provides legal assistance and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to Afghans. By the end of June 2024, 5,139 vulnerable forcibly displaced and stateless persons were assisted under its legal service project, including 4,343 individuals supported with legal consultations through UNHCR hired lawyers and 796 individuals through 829 mediations undertaken by Dispute Settlement Committees in 19 provinces across the country. The type of legal issues and disputes addressed includes family law matters (46%), followed by documentation related issues including issuance/renewal of residency, identity documents including Amayesh or visas and naturalization or other criminal, civil and financial matters.

EDUCATION

Education partners have furthered collective efforts to enhance GIRI's inclusive policies by building and improving educational facilities in areas with a high number of Afghan refugees, and by providing financial aid to families at risk of school dropout.

As part of a collaboration between UNICEF and NRC, support was provided for 200 out-of-school children through intensive catch-up classes. This support is being complemented by cash-for-education initiatives and ongoing assistance throughout the academic year.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE), UNICEF has developed a School Readiness Programme for 2,800 pre-primary students ahead of the new academic year to enhance enrolment and retention rates. UNICEF is also supporting the government to enhance the quality of educational infrastructure through the renovation of WASH facilities in 30 schools across two provinces, complimented by hygiene promotion and awareness campaigns targeting teachers, families, and 16,000 students.



Provision of Catch-up Course for out of school Afghan children by NRC and UNICEF in Khorasan Razavi province ©NRC



UNHCR signed a partnership agreement with the MoE, which includes the construction of four 12-classroom schools in the provinces of Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, Alborz and Sistan and Baluchestan. This follows the inauguration of 33 schools constructed under the previous years' partnership agreements. In addition,

in partnership with International Farda Development Activists Association (IFDAA), UNHCR will continue to facilitate access to higher education by covering tuition fees and living allowance for 298 refugee students in Iran under the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) programme.



NRC has supported 7,502 children who face significant educational challenges, including Afghan refugees and vulnerable Iranians. The support encompasses School Readiness, Accelerated Education, and catch-up courses, enabling children to obtain accredited certificates and transition into formal education systems. These educational programmes have been integrated with the Better Learning Programme, which offers basic psychosocial support. Moreover, NRC has expanded educational opportunities by constructing two new schools, completing one existing school, and the renovation of 15 schools, supplying the necessary equipment and educational kits, and providing life skills training for parents and caregivers.

UNESCO, in collaboration with Kharazmi University and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, conducted teacher training for 196 female Afghan teachers and provided follow-up classes for 480 female Afghan teachers who received training in previous years. The training course is a hybrid programme consisting of three main components: pedagogical skills, psychosocial support (PSS), and on-the-job training. Follow-up classes primarily revisit pedagogical skills and the comprehensive psychosocial support curriculum. Teachers are predominantly educated Afghan students in nonformal schools - vital solution to the shortage of school capacity in host areas with a high concentration of refugees.

RI in partnership with local NGOs supported four schools in Sistan and Baluchistan province in the east of the country bordering Afghanistan through the renovation and construction of WASH services. In addition, RI is facilitating the distribution of 1,000 education kits to school children in flood-affected areas in the province.

WFP continued providing conditional support for students attending primary schools and junior high schools in 2024. Through WFP's school meals programme, 9,150 refugee school children (50 percent girls) at primary and junior high schools and their 606 Iranian teachers received nutritious school snacks throughout the scholastic year. In addition, 2,830 girls also received cash incentives to support their education to promote girl's empowerment.

IOM has facilitated hygiene promotion by distributing hygiene kits and holding awareness sessions for 1,616 students across three settlements in Yazd province, central Iran. To improve access to educational facilities for refugees, IOM intends to build a six-classroom school in the Meybod settlement, enhance an existing school outside the Ardakan settlement with three additional classrooms, and supply IT equipment to schools within the Yazd province settlements. IOM is also increasing educational accessibility by covering transportation expenses and conducting pre-primary courses for children in preparation for the new academic year.

WASH

Following the floods in Sistan and Baluchistan in 2024, RRP partners have implemented multiple interventions to promote water safety and hygiene, including distribution of hygiene kits, aiding over 54,000 people. Moreover, UNICEF and the Ministry of Energy are constructing a wastewater treatment plant in Kohak village, enhancing sanitation and water

quality for the Niatak refugee settlement and host community. The completion of the Niatak water feeder line has marked a key achievement in providing sustainable services. These efforts ensure continued access to essential water and sanitation services, protecting the health of both refugees and the host community.



Members of the host community and refugees benefiting from WASH assistance ©UNICEF Watch the full story [HERE](#)



Installation of a water disinfection package with prefabricated room run by solar energy for water purification of a remote village in Dashtyari, Sistan and Baluchistan ©UNICEF



Consequences of Underfunding

PROTECTION

USD 1.8M



USD 1.8M is needed to provide specialized case management support and complementary interventions to some **2,700 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV)** through humanitarian partners. Failure to address these specific needs may result in increased risk of GBV, lack of resilience and participation in society, continued abuse, and other harmful long-term impacts.

In addition, **USD 500K** is required to support **650 children with child protection case management**. Children are provided with psychosocial support, benefit from cash-based assistance, and the identification of durable solutions is facilitated based on 'Best Interest Determination' for the child.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

USD 3M



In line with an area-based approach and supported by humanitarian-development nexus programming, **USD 3M is required to strengthen primary and secondary health services** through the construction and rehabilitation of health facilities, providing equipment, medicines, medical supplies, and health staff salaries in areas with a high concentration of refugees. If no additional funding is provided, 2.8 million Afghan refugees and vulnerable Iranian host community populations may no longer be able to access health care services.

EDUCATION

USD 48M



RRP partners have prioritized support to inclusive education services. Iran is hosting a large young refugee population, in need of education, many of whom are Afghan girls and women who are excluded from secondary education in Afghanistan. Some **USD 48M** is still required to support 220,000 school-aged children. Retention and transition to formal education through remedial classes, catch-up classes and school readiness programmes, educational support for refugee children with disabilities, provision of cash and in-kind assistance for students, construction and enhancement of existing facilities, and support to tertiary and higher education are key areas of support that are contingent on additional funding. The inability to address educational needs and insufficient funding could greatly strain the national education system and significantly increase the already high number of students out of school. Additionally, limited capacity leaves more Afghan families unable to enroll their children in school, heightening child protection concerns.

FOOD SECURITY

USD 13M



Some USD 13M is still required to support many Afghan households in Iran who suffer from **insufficient food consumption**. With increasing domestic annual inflation rates the price of food items continues to increase despite basic commodities still being subsidized by the Government. Although monthly in-kind and food assistance have been provided to some **33,000 individuals in 20 settlements** 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.



LIVELIHOOD AND RESILIENCE



USD 9M

USD 9M is required to support some 20,000 Afghan refugees in livelihoods and income generation including through business grants, seed funding, cash for work, or in-kind support to establish their own businesses. **Lack of funding may impede livelihoods and self-reliance** among the affected population. This may force many to revert to a dependency on humanitarian aid, undermining long-term development efforts. Additionally, there is an increased risk of individuals resorting to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as child labour, exploitation, or illicit activities to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, the inability to engage in meaningful socio-economic activities can lead to a loss of identity and dignity, eroding the social fabric and overall well-being of the community. The community may also experience increased poverty levels, food insecurity, and deteriorating mental health. Without adequate support, the potential for sustainable development and recovery in refugee and host communities may be severely compromised, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and crisis.

WASH



USD 4M

USD 4M is required to ensure access to water and cover the basic hygiene needs of 67,000 people living largely in the three Iranian provinces bordering Afghanistan. The lack of financial support may **negatively affect health, sanitation, and dignity of the target population**. Inclusive WASH services are critical to building the resilience of refugees as well as host communities and support stabilization where environmental pressures and a rising demand for services can increase inequities in access to WASH services.

SHELTER/ NFIS



USD 4M

Following the influx of Afghan refugees in August 2021, pressure on existing shelters in urban areas and settlements has increased. This has contributed to rising **homelessness and sub-standard shelter conditions**. Increased demand for shelter, combined with reduced incomes in real terms have prevented refugees in urban areas from accessing housing and presented challenges to host communities negatively impacting their social coexistence. To ensure that shelter conditions support the **health, security, privacy, and dignity of refugee populations, USD 4M is needed to support approximately 28,000 individuals** with cash assistance for shelter/non-food item (NFI) purposes and distribute Core Relief Items (CRI) country wide.

MULTI-PURPOSE CASH/ BASIC NEEDS



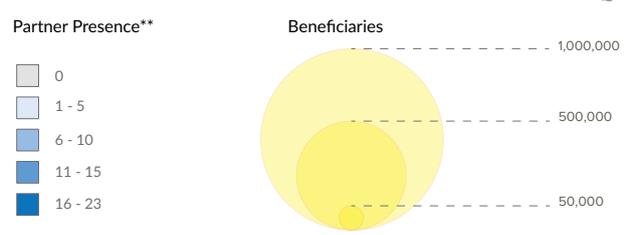
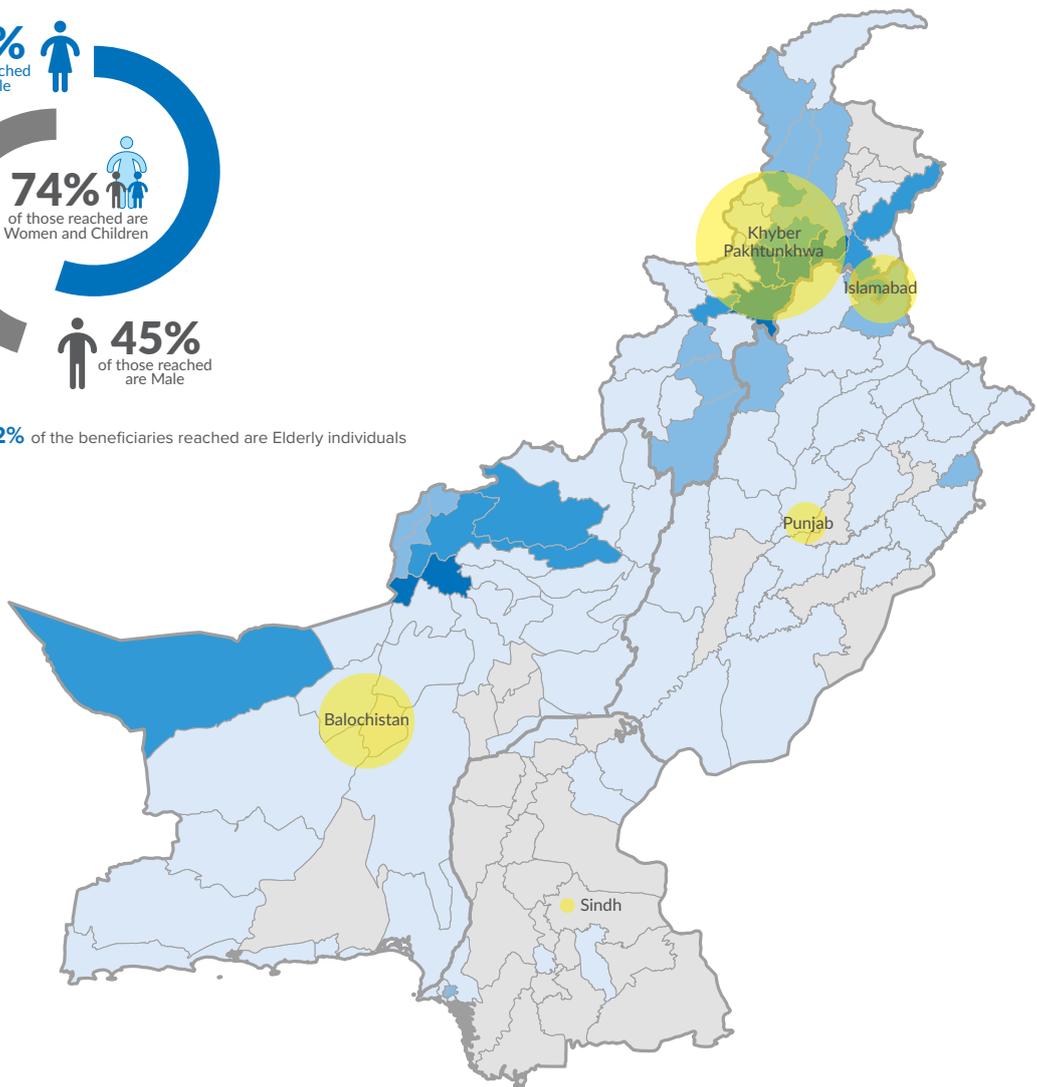
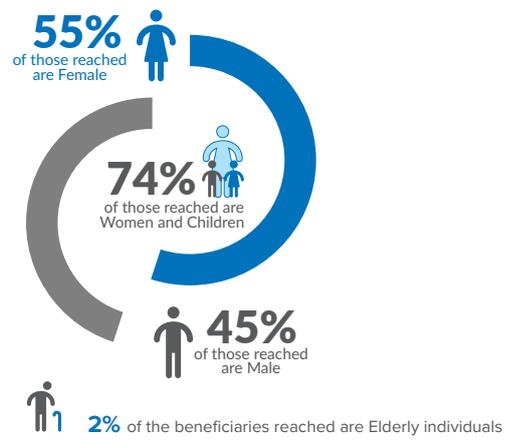
USD 14M

USD 14M is still required to cover the urgent needs of refugees and displaced people, including food security, primary healthcare, and shelter. Support in this sector is designed to provide timely and targeted assistance on a temporary basis to those in situations of vulnerability, with the aim of preventing a deterioration in their situation which leads to the emergence of more entrenched basic needs that require sustained support. The situation in Iran is compounded by the political and economic situation, where social unrest and high inflation are making it difficult for refugees to meet their basic needs. As such, assisting populations by providing them with unconditional one-off or monthly multi-purpose cash, giving Afghans the flexibility and autonomy to cover the full diversity of their basic needs as they see fit is a priority.



Pakistan

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



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

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Achievement Overview

■ Actual ■ Annual Target



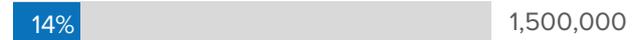
EDUCATION

54,100 children (including Afghan refugees, Afghans of other status and members of the host community) supported to access **primary** education



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

210,400 Afghans have been supported to access **primary healthcare services**



40,000 children (6-59 months) provided with Multiple Micronutrient Powder



LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

1,400 individuals supported with business grants, cash for work, or in-kind **support to establish their own businesses**



PROTECTION

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



72,400 women and girls accessing **Women and Girls Friendly Spaces**



35,800 individuals receiving **Legal Assistance**



SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

8,400 households with access to renewable energy and energy efficient items



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

38,500 individuals benefiting from installation/rehabilitation of the sanitation and solid waste management system



Situation Overview

For more than four decades, Pakistan has provided refuge to millions of Afghans. However, with the country grappling with economic and security challenges, Pakistan's long-standing commendable tradition of hosting refugees has been challenged. The introduction of the Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP) in 2023 mainly targeting undocumented Afghan nationals further constricted the protection space within Pakistan.

As of June 2024, Pakistan continues to host some 1.3 million Afghan refugees as well as over 1.5 million Afghans of different legal statuses. The refugee response plan targets intersectoral needs of around 4.5 million individuals, including host communities. Most Afghan refugees reside in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (54%) and Balochistan (24%), both bordering Afghanistan. Overall, approximately 30% of Afghans live in refugee settlements in rural areas, while 70% reside in urban and peri-urban settings.

RRP partners continued to implement their respective programmes in coordination with the Government of Pakistan, in particular, the Ministry of State and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, as well as through the federal and provincial authorities.

While the delivery of multi-sectorial assistance by RRP partners continued, the overall protection environment remained precarious. Over 647,000 persons returned to Afghanistan from September 2023 to June 2024, with the implementation of the IFRP, including some 156,000 persons in 2024, the majority of whom were undocumented. 13,846 refugees had their return facilitated through voluntary repatriation by UNHCR in 2024, marking an approximate 45 percent decline compared to the applications for the voluntary repatriation program triggered by the IFRP announced in October 2023. As a result of the pause in IFRP implementation, the rate of detention, deportation, and returns decreased considerably from January to June 2024, as compared to its peak in October and November 2023.

Resettlement quota allocated for Pakistan in 2024 has been lower than originally planned, due to the requirement for the payment of exit-related charges by the refugees, on par with other foreign nationals. By 30 June, UNHCR submitted 1,083 refugees for resettlement to eleven countries, significantly lower than in 2023. In the first 6 months of 2024, 1,858 refugees submitted for RST in 2023 and 2024 departed to six resettlement countries. Under the Complementary Pathways Schemes, a total of 134 persons departed to seven countries. Among the departures, 103 departed through Humanitarian programs, 26 via community or private sponsorship and 5 via family reunification. Advocacy to reinstate a "free of charge" exit permit mechanism for refugees continues.

The extension of Proof of Registration Cards by the government for a year until 30 June 2025 was a positive development, bringing stability and relief for Afghan refugees. RRP partners scaled-up protection interventions and engaged in sustained advocacy with the authorities with the support of the SSAR Local Core Group. These efforts aimed at strengthening the protection environment and enhancing support for those in need of international protection.

RRP partners also continue to promote the humanitarian-development nexus, leveraging economic and social development opportunities that benefit both Afghan populations and their Pakistani host communities. Scaling the investment of development partners in refugee hosting areas and targeted support to the Government of Pakistan in the spirit of international burden sharing and investing in comprehensive solutions remains a priority.



Key Developments in Delivery of Essential Services

The Government of Pakistan continues to support refugees' access to national services, enabling Afghans to free access to public schools (age 5 to 16) which includes primary, secondary, and higher secondary education, health services, opening of bank accounts and mobile connections. Afghan refugees have been allocated limited seats in Government universities. To this end, the RRP continues to support national services in refugee hosting areas, benefiting both refugees and Pakistani host communities.

In May 2024, the Government of Pakistan declared an "Education Emergency" to enrol the 26 million children between 5 and 16 years who are out of school into education institutions. In response, RRP partners in the education sector lead accelerated engagement with key interlocutors to support government efforts, promoting the principle of "leave no one behind", which includes refugee children of school age. Dedicated efforts to support girls access, enrolment and retention in primary and secondary school also took place.

Progress was also made in the transition of refugee village schools to the use of the Pakistani curriculum, and the gradual phase-out of duplicative educational facilities. Refugees access to public schools contributes to peaceful co-existence in host communities, maximizes investment in public resources and infrastructure and avoids the provision of a parallel education system. In addition, RRP partners have worked closely with the Government, including the Higher Education Commission, to improve access for Afghans to tertiary level education.

Partners also continued to build on strategic investments to strengthen the capacity of public health facilities to deliver quality health services to both refugee and host communities. In this regard, the Medical Teaching Institute's (MTI) and hospitals supporting Afghans have received medical equipment, including operating tables, ICU beds, and a CT scanner. In Balochistan, support to hospitals in high-density refugee-hosting areas remains crucial to help address growing needs and maintain the provision of inclusive health services to refugees alongside host community members. In addition, there has been a focus on the expansion of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services – a gap that has been identified.

RRP partners worked together with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees at the provincial level in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for the provision of services and assistance to refugees and host communities throughout the first half of the year.

Key Interagency programmes

Funding received through the RRP has enabled partners to provide basic services and assistance to both Afghan populations and Pakistan host communities. This supports Pakistan's inclusive policies especially in the area of education and health, as well as efforts to promote peaceful co-existence between Pakistani host and Afghan communities, and the resilience of Afghans.

¹ Include Afghans in refugee-like situation

PROTECTION

The Protection sector provided holistic support in all key areas, including legal assistance, community-based protection, Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence and Durable Solutions. Protection actors continued to expand community outreach and provision of specialized assistance to marginalized groups, including people with disabilities and other persons with specific needs. Legal assistance has been provided to approximately 36,000 individuals and legal awareness sessions were held with 17,000 forcibly displaced persons, which has been particularly critical at the time of uncertainties around IFRP implementation.

To further foster accountability to affected population, and ensure adherence to commitments related to the Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGD) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), RRP partners continued to further empower community participation, enhance communities' access to information and to the feedback and response mechanisms benefiting over 85,000 individuals. Over 800 individuals categorized as the most vulnerable received emergency cash

assistance, providing a much-needed financial safety net.

As part of investments to enhance the State-led child protection response for refugee children and caregivers, RRP partners supported amendments to the legislation for the inclusion of refugee children and strengthened social service workforce capacity. Working in partnership, UNICEF and UNHCR facilitated training for 132 government actors on child protection and case management in provinces of the Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. UNHCR contributed to the development of the Technical Note on Children on the Move, launched by the National Commission for Human Rights, which provides recommendations to strengthen institutional mechanisms for protecting children on the move, with a focus on Afghan refugee children.

In addition, the preparation and dissemination of information materials on the Juvenile Justice System Act by UNHCR and UNICEF sensitized national law enforcement agencies, while the development and translation of messages for family separation





prevention into local languages, were disseminated among local communities. A total of 1,081 at-risk children were supported through child protection case management and 6,345 individuals accessed psychosocial support services. Additionally, 50,189 community members were reached through training and awareness raising activities as well as community mobilization interventions on key child protection risks and available services.

UNFPA, UNHCR and IOM also collaborated on the preparation of a rapid needs assessment to determine key protection priorities for Afghan women and girls who require medium to longer term interventions and support. Awareness-raising on gender-based violence (GBV) reached 215,528 individuals and 5,637 GBV survivors accessed mental health and psychosocial support.

EDUCATION

RRP partners supported access to education for 82,741 Afghan refugee children and 40,924 females from host communities from January to June 2024. This included accelerated learning programmes, digital education, and secondary education opportunities. 565 refugees received university-level scholarships, including through the – DAFI - Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee initiative - and the DAAD scholarship programme, as well as joint efforts with the Higher Education Commission. Additionally, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 2,874 refugee girls received cash-based assistance to support their attendance, mainly by covering transport fees. This initiative, aimed at addressing barriers to girls' education, has been successful in reducing dropout rates.

Parent-teacher associations and community/school management committees were educated to improve

participation and bolster support for education in the home, with 640 female members involved. Educational and recreational supplies were provided to 67,303 students while professional development for 750 teachers prioritized inclusive and student-centered teaching strategies. 142 refugee village schools adopted the national curriculum, with 35 schools in Balochistan province completing the transition up to Grade 12. RRP partners continue to upgrade and register schools with the national authorities and integrate refugee village schools' data in the national Education Management Information System (EMIS), particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where the process is now well advanced. A total of 62 public schools have been rehabilitated and 40 schools supported to develop school improvement plans.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

RRP partners complemented the government's efforts on energy, environment, and climate change adaptation, through the delivery of solar energy solutions. Over 18,000 solar home systems have been distributed in 15 refugee villages, providing sustainable lighting for households. To improve quality of services being delivered across sectors like education, health, livelihoods, clean energy access is being provided to more than 70 community facilities assisting both host and refugee communities through sustainable uninterrupted energy access, with solar systems

functional at 55 facilities. In addition, tree planting programmes are combating deforestation and soil erosion, contributing to climate change mitigation.

Infrastructure enhancement projects in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector included installing solar-powered water pumps and promoting water conservation practices. These initiatives aim to ensure access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, reducing waterborne diseases and improving health outcomes.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Nutrition services were also expanded, benefiting a total of 65,910 children who were screened for malnutrition, 9,773 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) while 39,768 children received micronutrient powders. Nutrition interventions also supported some 44,867 pregnant

and breastfeeding mothers, who received iron-folic acid (IFA) supplements. 24,681 adolescent girls received IFA and 38,907 primary caregivers and mothers of children under 23 months were counselled on infant and young child feeding practices.



LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

In addition, RRP partners supported vulnerable Afghan refugees and local communities in Pakistan through livelihood initiatives. These initiatives included the provision of vocational and technical skills training for 2,625 youth across four provinces, and sustainable livelihood programme targeting 900 vulnerable Afghan refugee households in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. The programme also provided food security, agricultural, and livestock support to 500 women in Baluchistan,

enhanced artisanal skills for 400 women in Quetta through craft production in collaboration with the private sector and offered youth entrepreneurship training and startup assistance to 190 Afghan refugee youth in Islamabad and Quetta. Moreover, a number of studies were undertaken, including FAO's "Food Security, Livelihoods, and Resilience Assessment." The initial findings have informed programme design for food security and livelihood activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Consequences of Underfunding

OVERARCHING

Together, RRP partners in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, continue to play a crucial role in providing protection, assistance, and solutions to forcibly displaced and their host communities. However, in 2024, underfunding of activities poses a serious challenge. The implications of a financial shortfall have reverberated throughout the Pakistan response, amplifying the already difficult circumstances faced by refugees and host communities. As of June 2024, the RRP in Pakistan has received a 29% funding against an overall appeal of USD 368.3m. A considerable gap remains to enable RRP partners to holistically achieve much needed support to those in need, especially the most vulnerable refugees and host community members.

PROTECTION

USD 1.6M



USD 1.6M is required to ensure the comprehensive coverage of essential psychosocial services and safeguard the protection environment for refugees and individuals in need of international protection. Furthermore, gaps remain with legal counselling, to reach up to some 62,000 individuals through legal counselling and assistance necessitates USD 12.4M in funding. The GBV sub-sector requires USD 13.7M to ascertain availability of GBV services and build institutional capacities of public sector GBV service providers in support of long term and sustainable results. The GBV partners have reached 301,297 beneficiaries against the target of 601,259. In addition, some USD 9.2M is required to support 431,840 children and caregivers to prevent risks and respond to the child protection needs, including the case management services to the unaccompanied and separated children, MHPSS services, and awareness raising and information dissemination on child protection risks, available services, and referral pathways.

EDUCATION

USD 30M



USD 30M is required in the education sector to bridge a considerable funding gap of 74% to enable the provision of both formal and nonformal education to 203,100 people by the end of 2024.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT



Energy shortages because of limited funding may impede efforts to provide sustainable energy solutions in refugee camps and settlements. This will likely result in energy shortages, limiting refugees' access to lighting and cooking fuel, further compromising their safety, comfort, and well-being, in particular in those refugee villages located in isolated and remote locations.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

USD 22M



USD 22M is required to respond to the nutritional needs of 2.8 million people. Only 10% of this target population has been reached with funding of USD 6M.

Limited funds for nutrition services have led to the discontinuation of critical nutrition sites directly affecting the refugees and host community who rely on these critical nutrition services. Additionally, the treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM), provision of micronutrient supplements (MMS), and support for maternal, infant, young child, and adolescent nutrition (MIYCN), including infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF) and key family care practices (KFCPs) are funded till June 2024. Treatment for children with severe acute malnutrition in inpatient care as well as partners ability to address moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) through targeted supplementary feeding programs has been extremely challenging, with funding at just 3%. The interruption of these services could lead to increased malnutrition rates among vulnerable populations. The funding shortfall puts in danger the running of dedicated health facilities and presence of skilled nutrition healthcare staff in refugee settlements, which provide integrated services including nutrition interventions.

FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOOD

USD 23M



USD 23M is required to meet the food needs of a target population of 695,000, with a mere 1% of financial needs covered to date. On livelihood, 12.5M funding was received against 63.2M funding requirement representing 20% funding, and a 50.7M or 80% funding gap. This is in the context of the negative impacts of monsoon and related extreme weather conditions having adversely affected food production and contributed to further loss of crop yields, a loss of livestock and livelihoods. As a result, key commodity prices continue to increase, putting further strain on households. Sustained and scaled-up delivery of life-saving food assistance and emergency livelihood interventions are needed.



Funding and Partnership

Afghan refugees and Pakistani students learning the graphic design course at Women Welfare & Development Centre in Islamabad_UNHCR

The work of RRP partners would not have been possible without the extremely generous support of donors. As of the end of June 2024, the Regional Refugee Response Plan was 25 per cent funded across the sub-region, with USD 153m received out of USD 620 m required. The funding mirrors the level of funding received in 2023 and 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 proliferation of forced displacement crisis globally - an estimated 117.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing the public order by the start of the year – there is a need for the provision of scaled financial resources to respond effective to humanitarian needs, including in the context of Afghan displacement in the sub-region. Their host communities, who have welcomed Afghans for over four decades, also require significant support, particularly to strengthen public infrastructure which strives to serve both communities on an equitable basis.

RRP partners continue to reiterate the message of 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 in line with the 2024-2025 bi-annual plan. Both stipulations were important commitments by the international community as part of the Grand Bargain and remain integral to the humanitarian response for the Afghanistan Situation. Further information on funding levels can be accessed on the Refugee Funding Tracker which tracks interagency funding for the response.

RRP partners gratefully acknowledge government donors, private donors, charities, and other organizations for their valuable contributions to RRP in the first half of 2024 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 continued generosity of host countries for their support to Afghans over several decades. These countries should be effectively supported through scaled responsibility sharing by the international community, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

RRP 2024 donors: Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | China | Czechia | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Japan | Luxemburg | Netherlands | Philippines | Private Donors | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

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.



Regional Refugee Response Plan For Afghanistan Situation

Midyear Report 2024