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“The PARRs are at the heart of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees and UNHCR’s work in Afghanistan, facilitating access to durable solutions for refugee and IDP returnees and highlighting that humanitarian-development initiatives are key to lasting and sustainable outcomes.”

Mr. Indrika Ratwatte, UNHCR Director of the Regional Bureau for the Asia and the Pacific
Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) are locations where UNHCR and partners link community-based protection initiatives with medium-to long-term development objectives to improve access to basic services and essential life-saving infrastructure in places where Afghan internally displaced and refugees return.

PARRs are underpinned by the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration, and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR), the regional framework for protection and solutions of Afghan refugees agreed by the governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan in 2012. The SSAR has since been endorsed by the international community. It envisages a future in which displaced Afghans return to their homes permanently, prosper, and participate fully in the reconstruction of their country.

This document seeks to showcase the positive and successful impact of UNHCR’s Area-Based Approach for return, reintegration, resilience and Solutions in the PARRs through its multi-sectoral Community-based Protection and Solutions Programme Response (Co-PROSPER) on Internally Displaced People (IDP), IDP returnees, refugee returnees and host community members.

The tailored whole-of-community interventions as highlighted through the document seek to build resilient communities by linking humanitarian and development investments to improve access to basic and essential services and livelihoods, to mitigate further displacement while also providing Afghan refugees with information on work that is being done in the search for durable solutions. This helps Afghans identify the most appropriate durable solutions for themselves and their families. It also envisages that this approach will yield a peace dividend. Hence the PARRs are a signature area-based approach that optimize the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

Through inclusive partnerships, with relevant organizations, agencies and institutions, UNHCR aims to achieve collective outcomes and “Deliver as One” to ensure a positive impact, long-term sustainability and resilience of communities in Afghanistan.

Leonard Zulu, UNHCR Representative | Afghanistan
Introduction

As part of its commitment under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in 2019, Afghanistan along with Iran and Pakistan and with UNHCRs support, launched a dedicated Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SP-SSAR) in October 2019. Under the SSAR, a Core Group was established as an action-oriented and flexible mechanism to mobilize political, financial, and technical assistance. The SSAR, the result of an unprecedented regional, solution-oriented approach and quadripartite consultative process among the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and UNHCR, has served to jointly identify and implement approaches toward lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region. Since its launch in 2012, the SSAR has provided a comprehensive strategic vision and operational framework for three objectives: facilitating voluntary repatriation and enabling sustainable reintegration, while also assisting host countries and communities.

Following the events of 15 August 2021, the regime change in Afghanistan created the need for a transitional strategy for the UN to address the increasing political and social-economic instability. The UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) is the overarching strategic planning document for the overall UN assistance in 2022. It provides strategic direction and coherence; ensures UN coordination, collaboration, and complementarity of action; and provides a basis for joint risk-sharing and accountability.

The TEF highlights the evolving geo-political and socio-economic context, the cost of inaction if international assistance ceases; the UN's strategic priorities, intended collective outcomes and the resources required to achieve them; principles of engagement; and the UN coordination and implementation arrangements. Within the TEF, UNHCR co-leads the Protection and Social Cohesion Thematic Collaboration Group.
Given this operational background, UNHCR has put in place a Preparedness and Response Plan: (i) to provide critical protection and life-saving assistance and prevent human suffering; (ii) to improve access to essential services and mitigate further displacement; and (iii) to support building resilient communities as well as decreasing pressure on the shared resources in communities through area-based interventions in Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs). The PARRs are an integral part of the SSAR’s implementation in Afghanistan.

The PARRs seek to address the root causes and drivers of forced displacement. They seek to enable conducive conditions for sustainable reintegration through humanitarian-development-peace interventions in education, health, livelihoods, clean energy, and community infrastructure. Today, some 19 million people reside in 80 PARRs, including 6 million forcibly displaced and 13 million members of the host community.

UNHCR’s Co-PROSPER Strategy guides its response in PARR areas. The key objectives of Co-PROSPER include: (1) Creating an enabling protection environment by strengthening the systems capacities for effective service delivery and promoting the inclusion of PoC into local (national) development plans/programmes, (2) Improving the protection space and reducing vulnerability by increasing access to basic and social services, and (3) Enhancing self-reliance and supporting solutions by reinforcing human capital.

The following stories aim to showcase the positive impact of the effort that has been put into operationalising UNHCR’s strategy in this challenging environment, while highlighting pivotal changes our interventions have made in people’s lives.

With thanks to partners supporting investments in the PARRs.
Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) are the key component of UNHCR’s protection and solutions response, in line with the SSAR, and are aimed at mitigating displacement and building resilient communities through area-based HDP programming. PARRs include 55 areas of high return and displacement – 50 districts (11,000 communities) in 32 provinces and 5 major cities (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif) nearly 48% of the total population of 40.1 million. In the PARRs, as of August 2022*, 2.7 million are conflict-induced IDPs including 500,000 new IDPs displaced in 2021, 937,120 (2021) and 157,811 (2022) IDPs who returned to their places of origin, 3.22 are million refugee returnees, 226,559 are climate change-induced IDPs, and 30,000 refugees.

*Disaggregated figures by population group (Refugee returnees, IDPs, IDP returnees) should not be added up as the same person may have faced multiple displacements and returns. Refugee returnee statistics reflected from 2001 to present throughout the document.
The PARRs seek to ensure that populations have improved access to essential services (shelter, education, health, energy, livelihoods, and community infrastructure). This supports return and reintegration of both IDPs and refugees, while also building resilient communities. In developing the key community infrastructure facilities, a whole-of-community approach is adopted, which is sustainable and a community-driven engagement. Examples include developing access to productive, economic and disaster and climate) risk resilient facilities such as irrigation canals, roads, water facilities, clean energy, and community, youth and women’s centres.

Another focus is protecting and enhancing livelihoods as access to viable livelihoods is essential to enable successful return and reintegration. Interventions aim at increasing self-reliance through market-based interventions in local economic and productive sectors including in partnerships with the local businesses and private sector.

Small-business development activities include support for informal saving credit and/or self-help groups that are organised around a livelihood activity. This is combined with business development trainings, the provision of seed capital grants, market-based skilled business development, and improving market linkages with the private sector in the local economic sectors. Bee keeping, dairy farming, greenhouses, carpet weaving, solid waste management, handlooms and handicrafts, transport services are a few examples. Importantly, particular focus is on the empowerment of women, youth and vulnerable individuals, including initiatives such as (i) CODE4FUN, which teaches students and youth (boys and girls) to learn coding skills to develop mobile applications (for iOS and Android) and (ii) Made in Afghanistan (MaA) which promotes artisanal products and establishing market linkages under UNHCR’s Global Markets, Design and Empowerment of refugee artisans’ MADE51 initiative.

**Strategic Partnerships:** Given the 2-pronged approach in PARRs, i.e., creating an enabling protection environment through access to basic services and building resilience and self-reliance towards sustainable solutions, an integral part of the PARR response is operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus. In order to do this UNHCR engages with key UN Agencies, Development actors and the private sector to provide complementary and joint efforts in PARR areas while bringing in their expertise towards the search for long-term and sustainable solutions.

Currently, UNHCR is in partnership with UNDP, FAO, UN-Habitat, ILO, UNODC, AKDN, AWCCI and BRAC, to name a few.
2.5 million people benefitted from improved access to services.

Key sectors in the PARRs:
- Protection
- Education
- Health
- Shelter
- Livelihoods
- Infrastructure
- Water
- Borewells
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Waste Management
- Reconstruction
- Multi Purpose
- Cash Assistance
- Energy – Solar

2021 Third Party Impact Evaluation in PARRs:
- Improved significantly: 6%
- No change: 24%
- Moderately improved the overall wellbeing: 70%
Key Achievements in 2022

Improved access to Education for 23,495 students through construction of 15 schools, including 2 girls schools, 1 youth learning centre, and 1 internet café.

Improved access to Health for 114,286 persons through construction of 5 health clinics, and 2,000 women benefiting from maternity health facilities.

Enhanced Livelihoods for 47,445 people through market-based vocational and technical trainings and strengthened market value chains, cash for work, animal husbandry, and business support.

Provision of clean and sustainable energy for 243,000 persons.

Improved community connectivity and access to productive and economic services and facilities benefitting more than 2 million people, including construction of community centres and cash for work schemes including road networks, irrigation and drainage systems.

Improved access to safe and clean water for 105,857 individuals through solarized borewells.

Adequate housing (shelter) enabled for over 7,000 people with through construction and or rehabilitation of houses, including through cash assistance.

The focus on women and youth empowerment through community-based activities benefitted nearly 2,000 women through small business development under Made in Afghanistan artisanal products lines and digital inclusion including, ICT skills building and trainings, CODE4FUN, women-only internet café, and computer labs.
1. Strengthening Partnerships

UNHCR will strengthen partnerships through 2022 with key stakeholders, including:

**UN AGENCIES**
- UNDP
- ILO
- UN HABITAT
- UNODC
- FAO

**INGOs**
- BRAC
- AKDN/AKAH

**PRIVATE SECTOR**
- ACCI
- AWCCI

**DEVELOPMENT ACTORS & IFIs**
- WB
- ADB
- ISDB
- FMFB

2. Complementarity with Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan

The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) was established in October 2021, to help address basic human needs in Afghanistan, complementing the immediate, ongoing, humanitarian response. STFA constitutes an important instrument to enable well-coordinated international assistance to vulnerable communities including women and children through joint UN interventions with robust linkages with humanitarian actions.

3. Operationalization

**Co-PROSPER Strategy, Community Based Protection**

- Area Based Approach
- Whole of Community Service Provision

Operationalised in PARR Areas

**Planned Interventions**

1. Expansion to 80 PARRs
2. PARR Communications Strategy
3. Evidence-Based Data Collection
4. PARR Response Plans
5. Cash for IDP Return and Reintegration 2.0
6. PARR Virtual Reality Platform
Priority Areas of Return & Reintegration (PARRs)
INTERVENTION:
Agricultural support for the construction of greenhouses increasing access to livelihoods.

The weather in Kabul prevents year-round agricultural produce. However, through the construction of the greenhouse, provision of technical skills, connectivity to markets, people are able to cultivate produce throughout the year.

Rahim, a father of eight children says, "I used to work in a farm during the summer season but had no source of income in the winters.

Not only has this intervention enhanced my agricultural skills, it has also allowed me to support my family all year round. The change of season is no longer a stressor for me."

For more info please contact: REINTEGRATION UNIT: AWANS@unhcr.org, GUPTAM@unhcr.org | PARRs: AFGKAPARR@unhcr.org
INTERVENTION:
UNHCR and partners provided women with raw materials, skills training, machinery powered by clean solar energy and enhanced market linkages for women to be able to sell their final products. Women were able to increase production with less time and more income in a sustainable manner.
Most of the women (IDPs, returnees and host community members) are aged 19-22 and are the only breadwinners. They enjoy being able to gather regularly and learn skills toward income generation.

SUCCESS STORY II
Ferhana, a single mother of 5 and a refugee returnee, returned from Pakistan in 2016. The unstable environment coupled with the loss of her husband in 2019, left her with no hope. “I heard about this initiative just when I needed it. I’m so grateful that I don’t have to rely on anyone else to support my family.”
SUCCESS STORY 1

PROVINCE: Daykundi | PARR: Nili

INTERVENTION:
UNHCR established a Youth Learning Centre in a returnee township in Nili the capital of Daikundi Province. The centre has enabled the girls and boys of the community to receive free education in different areas from the volunteers of the community, strengthening their access to livelihood opportunities.

Nilofer Zazai says "Getting a quality education, and finding a job is the only dignified way to feed my family, it was a dream for all of us to receive quality education. Due to my family’s severe economic condition, I lost hope to afford an English language course to develop my career, but with establishing Youth Learning Centre and free education service now I found a way to make my dreams true".
INTERVENTION:
UNHCR supported the upgrading of Dasht-e Essa Khan High School in Bamyan City. The school had a building with six classrooms which were insufficient for all students, with no proper classes. Through the construction of additional facilities, currently more than 450 (boys and girls) have access to standard classrooms equipped with electricity, safe drinking water, green areas and boundary walls for privacy.

Shaikh Rezvani, a member of school parents shura says, “We have the opportunity to access school with standard classrooms and essential requirements where our children can continue their classes, and continue to hope that our girls can have continuous access to education for a bright future.”
SUCCESS STORY

PROVINCE: Balkh | PARR: Nahr-e-Shahi

INTERVENTION:
This PARR area hosts IDP and refugee returnees while also providing services to host communities. UNHCR’s cash for shelter interventions aim to mitigate further displacement by providing POC with access to dignified living conditions and shelters. Cash for shelter allows POC to construct their own shelter through designs suitable to their needs.

Fawzia, a single mother of 4 couldn’t believe she had been selected for cash for shelter. This intervention has given her a lot more stability and she is even able to engage in home-based livelihoods such as tailoring. She says, “This shelter has made me feel proud, I am an owner of a house for the first time in my life. My confidence also gives me hope for the future of my children.”
## SUCCESS STORY 1

**PROVINCE:** Badakshan  | **PARR:** Fayzabad

### INTERVENTION:
Through Community-Based Protection Monitoring and identification of persons with special needs (PSN), UNHCR and partners were able to support Abu in a time of need. Abu was living in a damaged house with his wife and children in displacement without any source of income due to his disability. UNHCR supported Abu under its cash for PSN project to be able to find a source of income through tailoring.

Abu says that the initial cash assistance support provided him with a boost. “After my injury, livelihood opportunities were extremely limited, and it was challenging to fend for my family. With this support I was able to open my tailoring shop and receive a regular income. This has also helped me enroll my children in school, which was not a possibility prior to this support.”

### Impact Stories:
- **4 Provinces**
- **8 Districts (PARR Areas)**
  - Baghlan: Pul-e-Khumri, Baghlan-e-Jadid
  - Badakhshan: Fayzabad
  - Takhar: Taloqan
  - Kunduz: Kunduz, Khan Abad, Imam Sahib, Dasht-e-Archi

### Sectors:
- **Education**
- **Health**
- **Shelter**
- **WASH**
- **Livelihoods**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Energy**

### Statistics:
- **349k** refugee returnees
- **672k** IDPs

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For more info please contact: REINTEGRATION UNIT: AWANS@unhcr.org, GUPTAM@unhcr.org | PARRs: AFGKAPARR@unhcr.org
SUCCESS STORY II

PROVINCE: Takhar | PARR: Taloqan

INTERVENTION:
The North-East region has a high population of refugee returnees and protracted IDPs. Beekeeping in this region has been a basic and core livelihood intervention practiced by local and host community members.

In response to the refugee returnees and to ensure sustainability to mitigate secondary displacement UNHCR and partners began support to 70 households in Baghak, engaging in skills and capacity building, connecting market value chains for selling honey and continuing monitoring to ensure the intervention is sustainable and able to improve POCs living conditions.

Ghulam, one of the beekeeping beneficiaries was provided with 3 bee-hives to generate income. After receiving the assistance, he was able to grow 3 more bee-hives, significantly increasing his honey production.

Ghulam had learnt beekeeping from his family and community growing up, but never had a chance to start his own production. This assistance provided him with a stepping-stone in the direction of self-reliance and empowerment. “I was very happy to be able to explore my production outside of my city and this has significantly helped in generating a regular income.”
SUCCESS STORY I

PROVINCE: Nangarhar | PARR: Jalalabad

INTERVENTION:
UNHCR constructed an OB-GYN ward in a regional hospital which is powered by a solar water system. The Ward provides a laboratory, midwifery and maternity facility. Over 600 women visit the Ward on a daily basis. This includes UNHCR POC as well as host community, city and village residents, providing safe access to overall maternity support.

One of the midwives says, “I feel so delighted and happy that this ward will improve the lives of vulnerable returnees and IDPs. It will also help in decreasing the deaths and other risks associated with maternity. As a midwife, I see a significant impact of the ward on maternity care for women and the babies. I am glad to see the number of mothers visiting the clinic for safe delivery increasing daily.”
INTERVENTION:
UNHCR and partners inaugurated the Kutobzai Girls High School in 2021 for girls between 13 and 18 years, grades 7 – 12. Presently, education for girls aged 7 – 13 years in grades 1 – 6 is being provided, with 9 female and 31 male teachers.

The school has 12 classrooms, with 4 administrative rooms and solar powered water facilities throughout the campus. Over 1,600 girls are able to access education because of the construction of this school.

Zeeana, a 5th grader student, 11 years of age has been living in displacement with her family with no access to education. She says, “Now I feel secure and protected inside the newly constructed classrooms and building and I feel like my privacy is protected. I can finally comfortably focus on my studies. It has also helped me enhance my knowledge and learning skills. There’s so much more to learn!”
SUCCESS STORY I

PROVINCE: Kandahar | PARR: Kandahar city (Mirwas Mena)

INTERVENTION:
Through UNHCRs cash for PSN project, POCs livelihood and immediate protection needs are supported. Feroza has been living in displacement for several years and is the only breadwinner as her husband is physically disabled. A few years ago, she build a mud house for her family, but was unable to finance structures including latrines, kitchen and walls as her daily labor wage was unpredictable and insufficient. When UNHCR and partners identified her for cash assistance she was beyond happiness!

Feroza had tailoring skills so was supported in procuring a sewing machine to establish a home-based small business to generate income. “I had so many orders coming in, that my daily wage increased substantially! I was able to enroll my children in school and even had enough saved to build my family a latrine, kitchen and boundary walls.” She adds, “This is not financial support to me, it’s support which improved my financial condition, social life, education for my children, having a safe shelter, and was a source of income and chance of reintegration for and my family.”
INTERVENTION:
UNHCR and partners inaugurated the Mirza Ahmad Khan Kalacha Girls High School in 2021 for girls between 13 and 18 years, grades 7 - 12. However, presently, education for girls aged 7 - 13 years in grades 1 - 6 is being provided.

The school has 12 classrooms, with 4 administrative rooms with the provision of solar powered water facilities throughout the campus. Around 850 girls are able to access education through the construction of this school.

The Principal says, “Previously, all 850 students were studying in 3 classrooms with multiple shifts accommodating more than 60 students per class. There were no desks and chairs for students, but now this new school building has a huge classrooms along with desks and chairs by which students can study better concentration and are also more comfortable. The surrounding environment does have a positive impact on students lives and ability to learn.”
SUCCESS STORY I

PROVINCE: Herat | PARR: Guzara

INTERVENTION:
In November 2021, UNHCR and partners selected Rahmat’s small-medium enterprise (SME) to receive support for further expansion. Rasul and his 2 friends living in displacement, started a small aluminum factory with around 5 workers who were also unemployed and living in the host community. Today, the SME has expanded to a total of 25 workers with no additional support from UNHCR.

Rahmat, 34 years of age and living in displacement, was beginning to anticipate leaving Afghanistan as his situation was dire. When his project proposal was selected, he thought this would be his final chance to start anew. A year after the establishment of the factory he says, “Initially I would dread waking up every morning. Now, I wake up each morning with ideas to increase my production. I’m even able to provide transportation to send my children to school!” Rahmat and his team intend on expanding their SME by employing 30 more people in the course of 2022.
INTERVENTION:
The UNHCR **MADE51 Initiative** was introduced to Afghanistan in 2017, substantially taking off in 2019. While focusing on handmade and artisanal products, the intervention requires minimal financial support. Over 900 women were selected for this initiative, starting with a first batch of 50 women. UNHCR and its partner provide a business center for a safe working space, along with a creche for mothers with children below the age of 5. So far, more than 20 women have graduated from this initiative, creating their own networks, market linkages and exhibitions. The initiative aims to expand throughout the country, providing several women with an opportunity to self-reliance and resilience.

**SUCCESS STORY II**
Fariba, a mother of 5 heading her household and providing for her parents, is living in displacement in Jebrail. She travels to Herat everyday to weave bags together with the friends she made at the women business center. “Finally my children are able to go to school through my income and for the first time my family respects me and I feel confident. It is truly empowering being financially independent!”
INTERVENTION:
UNHCR with its partner set up an internet café for girls in Jebrail PARR, where 200 girls are able to learn basic internet and Microsoft skills for a period of 6 months.

So far, over 3-4 batches of girls have benefited and graduated from this intervention. The internet café is in a centre where girls also have access to a library, a social room and mental health and psychosocial support as needed.

Everyday, 5 classes with 20 girls are scheduled, providing access to internet and web skills for 100 girls a day. The students spoke self-taught English while expressing how this opportunity strengthens their chances for job placements. They urged UNHCR to increase the number of hours they can visit the internet café.

Nazy, 17 years of age, a refugee returnee from Iran now living in displacement, walks over 1 hour to reach the internet café. In fluent and articulate English, she says, “I don't need transportation support. I need more lessons; I want to learn web and graphic design.” While holding back her tears in Farsi she says, “Just like other girls we have aspirations too, we want to be heard, we want to be responsible for our own decisions and have the freedom to use social media. This intervention takes us a step further in that direction.”
Expansion of Whole-of-Community and Area-Based-Approach in September 2022

From 55 PARRs to 80 PARRs Across Afghanistan

Number of forcibly displaced population living in 80 PARRs

- 3.5m refugee returnees
- 3m IDPs
- 1m IDP returnees
- 67k Refugees and Asylum Seekers

For more info please contact: REINTEGRATION UNIT: AWANS@unhcr.org, GUPTAM@unhcr.org | PARRs: AFGKAPARR@unhcr.org
## UNHCR list of Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration

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## UNHCR list of Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration

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IMPACT STORIES

AREA-BASED APPROACHES FOR RETURN, REINTEGRATION, RESILIENCE & SOLUTIONS

UNHCR Afghanistan
Police District 9
Pul-e-Chakhri
Kabul