



AFGHANISTAN

IFRC network mid-year report, January – June 2023

24 November 2023

IN SUPPORT OF THE AFGHAN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY



34

National Society branches



2,400

National Society staff



30,000

National Society volunteers

PEOPLE REACHED

Ongoing emergency operations



270,017

Disasters and crises



459,378

Health and wellbeing



2,156,135

Values, power and inclusion



29,722

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

in Swiss francs (CHF)

Total	Funding requirements	121.0M
	Income	
IFRC	Emergency Operations	
	Funding requirements	60.8M
	Income	23.3M
	Longer-term	
	Funding requirements	20.2M
	Income	5.6M
Participating National Societies	Funding requirements	25M
	Income	1.5M
Host National Society other funding sources	Funding requirements	15M

[Click here for more financial information](#)

Appeal numbers **MAAKE002, MDRAF007**




ONGOING EMERGENCY INDICATORS

MDRAF007 / Afghanistan / Humanitarian Crisis

People reached by National Societies with contextually appropriate health services	270,000
People reached with livelihoods support	130,000
People reached with immunization services	53,000
People reached with disaster risk reduction	45,000
People reached by National Societies with contextually appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services	43,000
People reached by protection, gender and inclusion programming	30,000
People reached with RMNCH clinical services in emergencies	15,000
People reached with shelter support	5,000
People reached with psychosocial and mental health services	3,000
People trained by National Societies in first aid	380
Number of formal interagency/international coordination platforms the IFRC network is part of	6
Number of National Society policies, strategies and procedures that have integrated the Movement-wide commitments or minimum actions (for example, disaster response, health care, gender, protection, communications and staff and volunteer management)	Applicable data not available
DREF / Appeal procedures are applied during the implementation of the operation	Applicable data not available
Logistics department provides constant support to the National Society's logistics unit for replenishment and other procurements	Applicable data not available
Movement coordination mechanism is described and active	Applicable data not available
Movement coordination meetings are organized, and updates are provided to the Movement partners	Applicable data not available

National Society has established a Movement Coordination mechanism in-country	Applicable data not available
National Society have strengthened their integrity and reputational risk mechanisms	Yes
National Society is showing progress in digital transformation according to the digital maturity model outlined in IFRC Digital Transformation Strategy	Yes
People have access to a feedback and complaints mechanism	Applicable data not available
# of National Societies with coordinated early action and contingency plans with DRM authorities	Applicable data not available
Percentage of target population reached with health promotion as a response to an emergency	100%

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Climate	People reached with heatwave risk reduction, preparedness or response	Applicable data not available
	People reached with activities to address rising climate risks	Applicable data not available
	People reached with activities to address environmental problems	Applicable data not available
	National Society is implementing nature-based solutions (including those with a particular focus on the planting of trees and mangroves)	Yes
	National Society is developing and implementing strategies and plans that address rising climate and environmental risks	Yes
Disasters and crises	People reached with livelihoods support	 459,000
	People reached per year with support services, in-kind, cash and voucher assistance for emergency response and recovery	 354,000
	People reached with disaster risk reduction	45,000
	People reached with shelter support	5,000
	Percentage of humanitarian assistance delivered using cash and vouchers	Applicable data not available
	People reached with contextually appropriate health services	 2M

Health and wellbeing	People reached with contextually appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services	179,000
	People reached with psychosocial and mental health services	88,000
	People reached with immunization services	74,000
	People trained in first aid	620
	People donating blood	Applicable data not available
Values, power and inclusion	People reached by protection, gender and inclusion programming	30,000
	People reached by National Society educational programmes	40
	Percentage of people surveyed who report receiving useful and actionable information	Applicable data not available
	People whose access to education is facilitated through National Society programming	Applicable data not available
	Community Engagement and Accountability is integrated and institutionalized in the National Society policies, operations, and procedures (with clear benchmarks)	Applicable data not available

ENABLING FUNCTIONS

Strategic and operational coordination	Number of formal interagency/international coordination platforms the IFRC network is part of	6
	Number of government led coordination platforms the National Society is part of	Applicable data not available
National Society Development	One National Society Development plan is in place	Yes
	Strategy for strengthening the auxiliary role developed or implemented	Yes
Humanitarian diplomacy	National Society is participating in IFRC-led communication campaigns	Yes
Accountability and agility	National Society has demonstrated progress in digital transformation according to the digital maturity model outlined in the IFRC Digital Transformation Strategy	Yes
	National Society has functioning data management systems that inform decision making and support monitoring and reporting on the impact and evidence of the IFRC network's contributions	Yes
	National Society has strengthened integrity and reputational risk mechanisms	Yes

IFRC NETWORK SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

National Society	Multilateral Support	Bilateral Support				
		Climate	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling Functions	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing
Albanian Red Cross					●	
Australian Red Cross	●					
Austrian Red Cross	●				●	●
Bahrain Red Crescent Society	●				●	
British Red Cross	●	●	●	●	●	●
Canadian Red Cross Society	●			●		
Danish Red Cross	●		●	●	●	●
Finnish Red Cross	●			●	●	●
German Red Cross	●		●	●	●	●
Irish Red Cross Society	●				●	
Italian Red Cross	●				●	●
Japanese Red Cross Society	●		●	●	●	●
Korean Red Cross	●				●	
Kuwait Red Crescent Society	●				●	●
Netherlands Red Cross	●		●	●	●	●
New Zealand Red Cross	●					
Norwegian Red Cross	●			●	●	●
Philippine Red Cross	●				●	
Qatar Red Crescent Society			●	●	●	●
Red Cross of Monaco	●				●	●
Red Cross Society of China	●				●	●
Singapore Red Cross Society	●				●	
Slovenian Red Cross	●				●	
Swedish Red Cross	●				●	
Turkish Red Crescent Society	●		●		●	●

● Planned

● Supported

OVERALL PROGRESS

Context

After decades of conflict in Afghanistan, in 2021 there was an improvement in the overall security situation and a significant reduction in the loss of civilian lives. This enabled humanitarian access in all provinces, including in many areas which had previously been inaccessible. However, significant humanitarian and development challenges remain. They include widespread food insecurity and reduced access to safe water due to prolonged drought, an overstretched health system which is dependent on international financing, economic hardships exacerbated by a sanctions regime, limited livelihood opportunities for households and communities owing to restrictions in international financing, and more frequent and severe climate related shocks. There are growing humanitarian needs in the country, and women and girls are impacted the most.

Humanitarian partners have assessed that Afghanistan continues to grapple with multiple shocks which have left 28.8 million people, or two thirds of its population, in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. One of the country's worst droughts in decades started in the first half of 2021 and has entered a third consecutive year, crippling economic decline has been going on for two years, and the effects of decades long conflict linger.

The key drivers of humanitarian need in 2023 include, reoccurring natural hazards, climate change, and protection threats (particularly for women and girls) and the economic crisis.

Afghanistan is highly prone to intense and recurring natural hazards – including earthquakes, floods, landslides, avalanches, and droughts – which often cause disasters, some deadly. According to the INFORM Risk Index from mid 2023, Afghanistan is ranked among the top 15 countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and at the same time, the least prepared to adapt.

Winters in Afghanistan can be harsh, with temperatures dropping to -33°C, or lower, for months at a time. Compounding the humanitarian situation are constraints relating to the participation of women and minority groups. In December 2022, the authorities announced measures limiting the participation of women in education and in the workplace. Pragmatic approaches which ensure the inclusion of women need to be pursued.

Afghanistan's economic crisis is widespread, with more than half of households experiencing economic shocks. High levels of unemployment and inflation of key commodity prices have caused the average household's debt to increase, challenging people's coping mechanisms and thwarting the already fragile economy's ability to adapt to shocks. According to the Socio- Economic Outlook 2023 released by UNDP, over 85 per cent of the country's population is now living below the poverty line.

Owing to limited funding for public healthcare, there are significant gaps in access, especially in rural areas. Related costs like those for transport, present additional barriers to accessing healthcare due to increasing poverty. Among key health threats are acute disease outbreaks, including multiple outbreaks of measles, acute watery diarrhoea, dengue fever, pertussis, Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever, and malaria. The threat of vaccine-preventable diseases to child morbidity and mortality remains. Congenital heart defects (CHD) are a widespread health concern across Afghanistan. The Afghan Red Crescent Society is the main local entity tasked to provide support to children with CHD and had registered over 26,000 cases by the first quarter of 2023.

The Afghan Red Crescent has a branch in each province of the country, and boasts a strong network of 24,600 volunteers, at least 6,700 of whom are women, who are crucial to delivering services to vulnerable groups, especially women and girls. Community members – men, boys, women, and girls – remain central to the efforts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as recipients, programme designers, and programme deliverers.

Against this backdrop, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) continued to support the Afghan Red Crescent in implementing humanitarian interventions and development programmes during the first half of 2023, reaching 2.5 million people with its services. Funding support for humanitarian interventions (Emergency Appeal MDRAF007 <https://www.ifrc.org/media/49455>) and longer-term programmes remained low during the reporting period. The IFRC calls for continued international support to Afghanistan, covering both immediate and long-term solutions.

Key achievements

During the reporting period, **Afghan Red Crescent**, with the support of the IFRC network, reached 2.5 million people with its services and programmes (both emergency and longer-term programmes). This figure includes 2.1 million people reached by primary health and care, more than 88,000 people reached with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), more than 180,000 people reached with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions, 45,000 people who received winterization kits, 460,000 people were provided with food and livelihoods assistance, and 20,000 people with cash assistance.

- Disaster risk reduction activities, aimed at enhancing community resilience to climate change, continued alongside humanitarian interventions reaching 45,000 people.
- The IFRC network supported Afghan Red Crescent to strengthen its auxiliary role, by providing leadership development opportunities, updating organizational strategies, plans and policies, enhancing accountability, and digital transformation. Afghan Red Crescent disaster response teams received training and equipment and relief items and winterization kits were prepositioned in strategic locations. These efforts supported Afghan Red Crescent's strategic goal of becoming a National Society delivering impartial, neutral, effective, sustainable, relevant, and accountable humanitarian services.
- The IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent enhanced humanitarian diplomacy efforts to highlight humanitarian and development needs in Afghanistan as well as influence policy and funding decisions of donor governments and institutions, in favour of affected populations. This was done via private meetings with diplomatic missions and donor institutions. The IFRC Country Delegation, Danish Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and Turkish Red Crescent also accompanied Afghan Red Crescent in various inter-agency coordination structures.
- As part of enhancing accountability, Afghan Red Crescent was supported to organize orientation sessions on fraud and corruption prevention, integrity, and safeguarding. Efforts to enhance the institutionalization of community engagement and accountability (CEA), including feedback response mechanism, continued. The Afghan Red Crescent's Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) department undertook monitoring while the process of engaging an entity for third-party monitoring started.
- Afghan Red Crescent continued to improve on the duty of care towards its volunteers by providing them with insurance. Safety and security of personnel and assets was prioritized through renewed efforts to enhance the capacity of the security department.
- Movement coordination and cooperation efforts were sustained as outlined in the Movement Cooperation Agreement. Membership coordination remained a top priority within the framework of IFRC's Agenda for New Way of Working, with all members of the IFRC network ensuring close formal and informal coordination, and leveraging their expertise, knowledge, and technical capacities. A shared leadership arrangement was formalized with the Turkish Red Crescent.
- The IFRC Country Delegation provided timely and relevant services to Afghan Red Crescent and Participating National Societies throughout the reporting period. This included Integration and Administrative Services by the Danish Red Cross and British Red Cross respectively, and procurement services to the Afghan Red Crescent. On procurement, with the aim of attaining timely responses to emergencies by the Afghan Red Crescent, the IFRC country delegation established framework agreements with suppliers and vendors for commonly needed commodities and services in order to reduce sourcing lead times, enable faster delivery to distribution points, and enhance value for money.

Changes and amendments

During the second half of 2023, the IFRC will revise its Emergency Appeal MDRAF007. This fifth revision, which will also extend the operation timeframe to 31 December 2024, has been taken for the following three reasons:

- Against a backdrop of declining humanitarian funding, the IFRC network will focus on specific niche areas that are not largely covered by the wider humanitarian system
- There is a need to capitalize on the strengths of Afghan Red Crescent as a local organization with a wide reach across Afghanistan, including in areas that the wider humanitarian system may not be able to access
- The delivery of humanitarian assistance will not only address urgent needs but also incorporate solutions that provide some degree of longevity, looking beyond relief

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

ONGOING EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emergency Operation	Afghanistan - Humanitarian Crises
Appeal number	MDRAF007
Duration	3 years and 8 months (10 April 2021 to 31 December 2024)
Target areas	All 34 provinces in Afghanistan
Funding requirement	IFRC Secretariat funding requirements: CHF 120 million Federation-wide Funding requirements: CHF 300 million
Link to Emergency Appeal	Afghanistan – Humanitarian Crisis (MDRAF007)
Link to operational strategy	Afghanistan - Humanitarian Crises - Operational Strategy

SECTORS OF INTERVENTION



Shelter, Housing and Settlements

Objective *Communities in disaster and crisis affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, wellbeing and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions*

The IFRC, via Afghan Red Crescent, is providing conditional cash (USD 2,620) and technical guidance on 'building back safer' to 305 households receiving transitional shelter support in Khost and Paktika provinces, which were affected by an earthquake in June 2022. Altogether, 60 staff and volunteers, including engineers, were provided with orientation on the safer shelter strategy, shelter assessment, working mechanism, and Red Cross Red Crescent Principles, in June 2023. The trained staff and volunteers are carrying out community sensitization sessions on 'building back safer' with six key messages of safer shelter construction. The engineers will provide technical guidance to 305 households that will be rebuilding their homes.

As part of the shelter strategy, IFRC procured ten tractors (with trolleys) to assist affected communities that had challenges in transporting their shelter and construction materials due to the nature, distance and topography of their affected areas. These tractors are part of the shelter strategy, developed in coordination with the Emergency Shelter and Non-Food items (ESNFI) Cluster, to provide transportation and move shelter items to the hard-to-reach areas. The tractors are foreseen to be also needed for livelihood interventions and farmer-led initiatives in 2023. Each tractor also has a plough which will be used for land preparation for agriculture activities.

■ IFRC network joint support

The Turkish Red Crescent is supporting Afghan Red Crescent to rebuild 65 houses for households whose homes collapsed due to the earthquake of 22 June 2022.

Disaster risk reduction is mainstreamed across all interventions of Afghan Red Crescent supported by the IFRC Secretariat and participating National Societies. This also applies to the houses built with Turkish Red Crescent support.



Multi-purpose Cash

Objective *Socio-economically vulnerable households have the ability to meet their basic needs*

During the reporting period, IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent provided cash assistance to 2,087 households or 18,848 people at risk (male-7,822 and female -11,026) in five provinces (Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar Urozgan and Zabul).

With the support of IFRC, Afghan Red Crescent is distributing cash to 24,000 at risk households, especially widows, between June-September 2023. Each household is receiving AFN 8,500 (CHF 85) which will cover 100 percent of the cost of a monthly food basket for a family of seven. The assistance is aligned with the Food Security and Agriculture Clusters' (FSAC) recommended guidelines on humanitarian response packages.



Livelihoods

Objective *Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods*

Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC distributed fertilizers to 3,125 households, 30 of them female headed, in five provinces (Kandahar, Kunduz, Ghor, Nangarhar, and Sar-e-Pul) in March 2023. Each household was provided with 150 kilogrammes of urea fertilizer which they applied to their wheat crop to increase yields.

With the support of IFRC, Afghan Red Crescent conducted a two-day agricultural technical training for 120 farmers from the six community groups in five provinces (Kandahar, Kunduz, Ghor, Nangarhar, and Sar-e-Pul) in March 2023. The training covered integrated pest management, good agricultural techniques, fertilizer application methods, water management and weed management. The participants were selected from the 3,125 households that received urea fertilizer. Additionally, four Afghan Red Crescent staff from each province participated in the training as co-facilitators so that they could be mobilized as resource persons for future training. Following the training, they have been sharing their knowledge and skills with other farmers in the village through orientation and onsite mentoring.

As part of integrated programming, Afghan Red Crescent is supporting 305 households with livelihood activities such as cash and technical training for livestock rearing in Spira, Gayan and Barmal districts of Khost and Paktika provinces. They are the same households that are receiving transitional shelter support from Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC.

Twenty women from Kabul and Kandahar 'marastoons' (social welfare centres) received vocational training in the first half of 2023. Altogether, 14 women from Kabul received training on tailoring clothing for children and women, and creative design techniques, while six women from Kandahar learned embroidery. In addition to financial support for the training, Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC provided AFN 75 per day to each participant for refreshments. All the women will be provided with grants of USD 2,000 each as seed capital for starting their businesses.

■ IFRC network joint support

With the support of the **Turkish Red Crescent**, Afghan Red Crescent distributed food items to 5,436 households in 11 provinces (Balkh, Farah, Helmand, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Paktika, Parwan, Sar-e-Pul and Jawzjan).



Objective *Strengthening holistic individual and community health of the population impacted through community level interventions and health system strengthening*

Primary health and immunization

During the reporting period, Afghan Red Crescent with the support of IFRC, operated 47 Mobile Health Teams (MHTs), eight Health Sub-Centres (HSCs), and 40 Health Camps (HCs) with the funds raised through the Emergency Appeal MDRAF007 and the Unified Plan 2023. The health facilities operated in remote areas of 16 provinces, including Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan, Kandahar, Helmand, Urozgan, Zabul, Parwan, Sar-e Pol, Bamyān, Paktika, Wardak, Nimroz, Herat, Badghis, and Jawzjan.

From January to June 2023, all 95 health facilities (47 MHTs, eight HSCs, and 40 HCs) were able to reach 317,867 people (122,689 male and 195,178 female) with primary health care services such as outpatient services, communicable and non-communicable diseases (acute watery diarrhoea, pelvic inflammatory disease, urinary tract infection, hypertension, obstetric/neonatal care), 15,084 women with reproductive health services (family planning and antenatal/postnatal care), health education, dressing, referral, and routine immunization services, including 73,748 children with immunization services and 8,369 childbearing-age women who were provided with the tetanus vaccine.

Under routine immunization services, the MHTs provided Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG), Hepatitis B, oral poliovirus vaccines, inactivated poliovirus vaccines, measles, pentavalent pneumococcal conjugate vaccines, and rotavirus vaccines, which provide protection against tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, poliomyelitis, measles, H. Influenza type B, Pertussis, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Rotavirus infections, and pneumococcal diseases. All MHTs were fully supplied with medicines and medical consumables.

The health facilities, including HCs and HSCs, also engaged with the targeted communities regularly to enhance their health knowledge, raise health awareness focusing on vaccine demand generation, and promoting healthy behaviour through awareness sessions in Kandahar and Paktika provinces. The objectives of the sessions were to mobilize targeted communities for vaccines, take preventive measures against COVID-19, and involve community elders and local provincial health directors in the project implementation cycle. In the first half of 2023, Afghan Red Crescent operated 212 health facilities. They comprised one district hospital, 46 basic health centres, one community health centre, 23 sub health centres, 101 MHT and emergency MHT (EMHT), and 40 health camps.

Community health and first aid

A total of 640 volunteers were trained in epidemic control for volunteers, household water treatment and hygiene promotion. The trained volunteers carried out household visits and conducted integrated awareness-raising sessions on hygiene promotion, prevention of water-borne diseases, COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement and preparation of oral rehydration solution (ORS), reaching out to 27,542 people (female 1,039; male 16,503) in 10 provinces (Badghis, Ghor, Sar-e-Pul, Farah, Daikundi, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, and Panjshir).

In addition, 23 community health committees with 345 members and 18 grandmothers' committees with 325 members were established in the 10 provinces.

A total of 380 volunteers were trained in first aid and psychological first aid (PFA), with the support of IFRC, in these 10 provinces. The trained volunteers were equipped with first aid kits. The volunteers provided first aid services to 2,717 people (1,480 male and 1,237 female). These individuals have benefited from timely and professional assistance, ranging from addressing minor injuries to stabilizing patients in critical condition.

Ambulances and Mobile Health Teams vehicles support

IFRC procured and handed over more than 10 Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) vehicles and four ambulances to Afghan Red Crescent to strengthen its primary health and care services as well as the health referral system in Khost and Paktika provinces. Two more ambulances are in the pipeline to be handed over to Afghan Red Crescent.

■ IFRC network joint support

Danish Red Cross: During the period of reporting, with the support of the Danish Red Cross, 91,045 people (40,431 male and 50,614 female) were reached by 12 Afghan Red Crescent mobile health teams in three provinces: Nangarhar, Kandahar Helmand.

Norwegian Red Cross: During the reporting period, with the support of Norwegian Red Cross, Afghan Red Crescent reached 1,079,979 people with primary health and care services.

Table 1 Afghan Red Crescent health care services, January–June 2023

Sector	Target provinces	Number of people reached
Basic Health Centres	In 30 provinces (except Daikundi, Kunar, Uruzgan and Paktika)	532,315
Mobile Health Teams	In 27 provinces (except Nimroz, Sar-e-pul, Maidan Wardak, Paktika, Badghis, Bamyán, Parwan)	276,652
Health Sub-Centres	12 provinces (Nangahar, Kunar, Panjshir , DKN, Khost, Herat, Ghazni, Logar, Pakitka, Kunduz, Zabul, UZG)	228,201
Health Camps	12 provinces (Nangahar, Kunar, Panjshir , DKN, Khost, Herat, Ghazni, Logar, Pakitka, Kunduz, Zabul, UZG)	4,809
Health (Badambagh DH)	Kabul	38,002
Total		1,079,979



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Objective *Ensure safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and adequate hygiene awareness of the communities during relief and recovery phases of the Emergency Operation, through community and organizational interventions*

The following activities were completed during the reporting period:

- A total of 2,400 family hygiene kits were distributed to 2,400 households, benefitting 19,982 people (male 10,056; female 9,926) in three provinces of Kandahar, Panjshir, and Sar-e-Pul. Each family hygiene kit consists of hygiene items for a seven-member household for a month in Afghanistan
- A total of 43,377 people (male 22,122; female 21,255) were reached with hygiene promotion activities in the 10 provinces mentioned above
- Volunteers trained in household water treatment and hygiene promotion conducted integrated awareness-raising sessions on hygiene promotion, prevention of water-borne diseases, and the preparation of oral rehydration salts (ORS), reaching out to 27,542 people (female 1,039; male 16,503) in 10 provinces (Badghis, Ghor, Sar-e-Pul, Farah, Daikundi, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, and Panjshir)
- Each of the 305 households targeted for shelter construction support will also receive funds for latrine construction in Khost and Paktika provinces
- Coordination with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) for starting community water projects during the second half of the year



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

Objective *Communities identify the needs of the most at risk and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, due to inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and to address their distinct needs*

During the reporting period, Afghan Red Crescent with the support of IFRC selected 24,000 at risk households for cash assistance across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The funding has all been allocated both to women and to women at risk including widows and female-headed households, families with people with living with disabilities, and pregnant and lactating mothers.

The IFRC's quality and accountability team conducted an assessment to assess if the cash and relief supplies (for example, the winterization kit) distribution in Khost and Paktika provinces met the minimum standards. The assessment revealed that while most of the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) minimum standards were met during the distribution, some of the standards were not and this needs to be taken into consideration in future distributions. Please refer to [Afghanistan-Khost and Paktika Earthquake Operation Update 2 \(MDRAF007\)](#), page numbers 23–24 for the findings of the assessment.

Key recommendations from the assessment:

- Some people said that they travelled eight hours of driving distance to reach the distribution location in Khost province. Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC need to find a way so that all targeted households only have to travel a minimum travelling distance to receive assistance
- There was no designated waiting area where people could wait to receive assistance. This should be improved in future distributions
- The quality and accountability team have shared findings and recommendations with the operation team for future distributions. A sectoral update is given below

Dignity kits distribution

Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC distributed 4,746 dignity kits to women and girls in five provinces (Kunduz, Ghor, Badghis, Daikundi and Farah). The dignity kits contain basic supplies to maintain the health and dignity of women and girls affected by the crisis. Afghan Red Crescents' gender unit was involved in the distribution of the kits and community sensitization through two female staff of the gender unit and female volunteers, was carried out in the respective provinces.

■ IFRC network joint support

Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) is mainstreamed in all IFRC Secretariat and participating National Society supported interventions. A total of 52 staff and volunteers, including members of mobile health teams, livelihoods and health staff, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) volunteers received training on PGI. Part of the training is to assess whether services delivered meet minimum standards for PGI in emergencies. Similar trainings are expected in the next reporting period.



Community Engagement and Accountability

Objective *Target people and communities with timely, accurate, trusted, and accessible information regarding Red Cross Red Crescent services while engaging with the National Society to share feedback that is used to adapt and guide programmes and operations.*

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) has been mainstreamed in all interventions.

A self-assessment exercise was carried out in three regions (east, south and southeast regions) where the CEA and PGI training was conducted. The assessment helped to inform how well the National Society meets the CEA minimum actions and where the gaps are at all levels for further action planning. One of the priority gaps identified was the current lack of an CEA-integrated policy and strategy at the institutional level.

The Afghan Red Crescent leadership was oriented on the importance of CEA to ensure vulnerable people are at the centre of Red Cross Red Crescent humanitarian assistance. The leadership was fully supportive of the CEA and PGI integration plan and CEA has also been reflected in the Afghan Red Crescent strategic plan. The reactivation of the Afghan Red Crescent toll-free number (1313) to directly receive community feedback is planned. As part of the self-assessment follow-up, the IFRC quality and accountability team drafted the CEA policy and translated it into two local languages.

In terms of programming, programme staff were oriented on the importance of CEA and the minimum actions of CEA that need to be integrated into all phases of a programme. Staff and volunteers involved in emergency response were also oriented on the 10 minimum actions of CEA to be integrated into emergency response operations. These include informing targeted communities about Afghan Red Crescent emergency response plans and services during the community rapid assessment.



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery

Objective *Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster*

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate adaptation are mainstreamed across all interventions of Afghan Red Crescent, supported by the IFRC Secretariat and its networks. Communities are prepared for risk reduction activities through training and through their engagement in community and household selection, planning, implementation and monitoring of the interventions. Afghan Red Crescent staff and volunteers are trained in emergency response such as branch disaster response team (BDRT) and disaster response unit (DRU) trainings so that they can be mobilised in emergency operations. Response materials are being prepositioned for distribution during emergencies.

Disaster risk management committees have been formed in 30 communities and school safety committees in 10 schools of Herat and Samangan provinces. The committee members have been trained in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, school safety and risk mapping, and enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (eVCA). Each committee has been equipped with an emergency kit/school safety kit comprising of 28 items. Details of the emergency kit have been provided in this report under Strategic Priority 1: Climate and Environment. Communities are supported and encouraged to plant drought resistant fruit such as grapes and apricots in Herat province. Disaster Risk Reduction has been integrated across all sectors. Under the shelter sector, indigenous practices combined with technical input, to inform the shelter repairs and construction in Khost and Paktika. Local masons were trained, and house owners were oriented on how to 'build back safer'.

To protect people from the harsh winter, with the support of IFRC, Afghan Red Crescent provided winter clothes to 6,244 households comprising of 43,708 people in 10 provinces (Badakhshan, Bamyan, Daikondi, Ghor, Kabul, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan and Paktika) in January 2023. These provinces regularly have a harsh winter. For further information, please refer to the [Humanitarian Crises MDRAF007 Operation Update 8](#) for province wise distribution data, the composition of dignity kit and post-distribution monitoring findings.

In addition, 2,000 blankets were provided to 400 households affected by the earthquake in Gayan district of Paktika province in March 2023. Each household received five blankets.

■ **IFRC network joint support**

With support of **Turkish Red Crescent**, Afghan Red Crescent distributed winter clothes to 200 children in Kabul in January 2023.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Afghan Red Crescent has been implementing a strengthening resilience and climate change project in Herat and Samangan provinces, with the support of IFRC through Japanese Red Cross funding. The project has two components: livelihoods and disaster management. Key progress under the project during the reporting period is as follows:

Implementing mitigation projects at community level

- Thirty disaster risk management (DRM) committees in Herat (20) and Samangan (10) with 12 members in each committee have been established. The key roles of the DRM committee are to: assess and identify the hazards that the communities are vulnerable to, map and rank areas at most risk of being affected by the hazards identified, design community based DRR activities together with Afghan Red Crescent personnel informed by the risk assessment and mapping, and to guide community members in the implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. The committee is also responsible for monitoring and reporting to Afghan Red Crescent, the hazards that have affected their community
- Provided 28 items as an emergency kit to each DRM committee for establishing a DRM centre in the community, which will be used in disaster risk reduction activities.

Engaging youth and volunteers for climate risk awareness in schools and communities

Strengthening resilience and climate change projects aim to improve abilities and capacities of communities including schools to assess, identify, prioritise and address risks of natural hazards that have occurred or may occur due to climate change phenomena through organized community and school structures.

Safe school initiatives have been included in the project to enhance safety and security measures in schools. Key accomplishments of the reporting period include:

- Established 10 school safety committees in Herat (six committees) and Samangan (four committees) with 12 members in each committee. Key roles of the committee: (i.) to maintain a safe learning environment and plan for educational continuity, conforming quality, and (ii.) to monitor project activities in the school and manage project related conflict/ problems and tensions in the schools
- Provided 28 items as school safety kits to each school safety committee in Herat and Samangan in April 2023
- Trained 480 people including school safety committees and DRM committee members on DRR and climate change, as well as first aid and hygiene promotion trainings, in 10 schools of Herat and Samangan provinces. Please refer to table 2 for the detail of the participants.

Table 2 Detail of trainings under school safety initiatives

Name of training/ workshop	Month	Types of participants	No. of days	No. of trainings	Number of participants						
					Herat			Samangan			Total
					Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
School safety and risk mapping	March	Community members, school safety committee and DRM committee members	2	2	60	10	70	48	2	50	120
DRR and climate change	June		3	2	312	0	312	168		168	480
First aid and hygiene promotion			5	2	312	0	312	168		168	480

All school safety committee members (120 people) were trained on school safety and risk mapping. They will conduct multi-hazard school-based risk assessments and develop school safety plans.

Afghan Red Crescent is starting Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) in schools (WinS) activities in public schools in Badghis, Herat and Kabul provinces.

Building and enhancing the climate action capacity of Afghan Red Crescent volunteers and technical staff

With the support of IFRC, Afghan Red Crescent conducted business skills and market linkages, DRR, climate change and early warning systems, school safety and risk mapping, first aid and hygiene promotion (HP) vulnerability and capacity assessment (EVCA) training for Afghan Red Crescent staff and volunteers as well as community members. Details of the training can be found in table 3.

Table 3 Details of trainings for enhancing capacity of Afghan Red Crescent staff and volunteers

Name of training/workshop	Month	Types of participants	No. of days	No. of trainings	Number of participants						
					Herat			Samangan			Total
					Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Business skill and market linkage ToT	May	Project staff, female volunteers	3	2	14	8	22	9	4	13	35
DRR, climate change and early warning system	April	Project staff, DRR volunteers	3	2	27	0	27	27	0	27	54
School safety and risk mapping		Project staff, female volunteers, ARCS headquarters staff	2	2	13	12	25	13	12	25	50
First aid and HP		5	2	13	12	25	13	12	25	50	
EVCA	June		6	2	13	12	25	13	12	25	50

Delivering humanitarian assistance to people affected by climate and environmental crises

- Each of the 200 households received AFN 24,000 (Approximately CHF 260) conditional cash grants in two instalments for the procurement of income generation tools in Herat and Samagan provinces. Out of this number, 65 per cent are female.

IFRC contacted financial service providers for the distribution of cash following the agreed standard operating procedure. Afghan Red Crescent staff and volunteers were in charge of the selection of recipients, in consultation with public authorities and DRM committee members, as well as of crowd control and verification at distribution points.

With the cash, the recipients procured income generation tools and the Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC staff supported them to select and procure the exact tools that they mentioned in their business proposal. People also received business skills and market linkages training. Please refer to table 4 for further details.

Table 4 Detail of business skills and market linkage training

Name of training	Month	Types of participants	No. of days	No. of trainings	Number of participants						
					Herat			Samangan			Total
					Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Business skills and market linkage	June	Recipients of income generation activities	4	2	30	100	130	20	50	70	200

Sapling distribution

Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC distributed different varieties of 42,000 saplings (Apple, almond, pistachio, apricot, grape, pomegranate and plum) to 840 households in four districts (Ghoryan, Kosahn, Koshk-e-Kona, Koshk-e-Robat Sangi) of Herat province, along with education on sapling plantation, orchard management, and sapling disease control training.

The local committees in the targeted provinces made the strategic choice of drought-resistant seedlings that can withstand plant diseases. These have a number of benefits in relation to climate change and community resilience.

Key benefits of sapling plantation include:

1. **Climate Change Mitigation:** Trees are essential in reducing carbon dioxide levels through the process of photosynthesis. They absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as carbon, thereby mitigating the impacts of climate change. By planting saplings, the project funded by the Japanese Red Cross, will contribute to the overall reduction of greenhouse gases, which helps combat global warming.
2. **Enhanced Biodiversity:** Planting saplings promotes biodiversity by creating new habitats for various plant and animal species. As the saplings grow into mature trees, they attract diverse wildlife, including birds, insects, and small mammals. This biodiversity contributes to ecosystem stability, which is crucial for the long-term resilience of the selected communities in Samangan and Herat provinces.
3. **Flood Control and Risk Reduction:** The selection of planting areas prone to flooding by the local committee is a significant step in reducing the risk of flood-related disasters. Trees, including the saplings being planted, play a vital role in water management. Their roots help absorb excess water from the soil, reducing runoff and the likelihood of flooding. Additionally, tree canopies slow down rainwater, allowing it to infiltrate the soil more effectively. By planting saplings in flood-prone areas, the project is helping to minimize the risk of flooding and its associated damage to homes and infrastructure in the villages.
4. **Soil Conservation:** The act of planting saplings contributes to holding the soil firmer, which aids in soil conservation. Tree roots penetrate the soil, anchoring it and preventing erosion. This is particularly crucial in areas with vulnerable types of soil that are prone to erosion due to heavy rainfall or high winds. By preventing soil erosion, the planting of saplings helps maintain fertile soil for agricultural purposes and reduces the sedimentation of water bodies, thus preserving water quality.
5. **Community well-being:** The presence of green spaces, facilitated by planting saplings, has a positive impact on community well-being. Trees provide shade, which can help lower temperatures, especially in hot climates. They also improve air quality by capturing pollutants and releasing oxygen, creating a healthier environment for residents. Access to green spaces has been linked to enhanced mental and physical health, increased social cohesion, and improved overall quality of life.

By considering these factors, the intervention of planting drought-resistant and disease-resistant saplings in flood-prone areas chosen by the local committee, aligns well with the goal of reducing risks and enhancing community resilience. The saplings contribute to climate change mitigation, improve biodiversity, aid in flood control, conserve soil, and positively impact the well-being of local residents. Overall, this intervention is a holistic approach to addressing multiple challenges associated with climate change and enhancing the long-term resilience of the community.

Following the distribution of saplings, Afghan Red Crescent's field staff visited a farm of 100 farmers to observe the condition of the plants and provide technical support or education in four districts of Herat province. It was found that approximately 95 percent of saplings were germinating and sprouting in the field.

■ IFRC network joint support

Pursuing partnerships on climate resilience programme

- **Danish Red Cross** conducted a scoping study for the development of a climate resilience programme in Asia (Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar) (Source: https://www.rodekors.dk/sites/rodekors.dk/files/2023-08/At%20the%20frontlines%20of%20the%20climate%20crisis.pdf?_gl=1%2A14lurr4%2A_gcl_au%2AMTU3MzExNjgwMi4xNjkyNzcyOTQ3)



Disasters and crises

Delivering humanitarian assistance to people affected by evolving crises and disasters

With the support of IFRC, Afghan Red Crescent has been implementing a humanitarian crises operation in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Major progress under this operation has been provided under 'Sectors of intervention' of this report and further reports and information can be found on the IFRC website, <https://www.ifrc.org/emergency/afghanistan-humanitarian-crises>

The IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent are increasing their preparedness for the upcoming winter and for potential disasters. Stocks of winterization kits, tarpaulin, tents, water storage containers, hygiene supplies, cooking utensils, and other essential household items are being pre-positioned in strategic locations across the country. Afghan Red Crescent disaster response teams are being equipped with updated data collection kits, identification materials, and refresher training.

To build and enhance community programming capacity, Afghan Red Crescent volunteers and technical staff have received a variety of trainings that have strengthened their capacity to plan and implement different programmes and activities in the community.

The Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC is providing conditional cash (USD 2,620) and technical support to 305 households for transitional shelter support in Spira district of Khost and Gayan and Barmal districts of Paktika province from July 2023. Afghan Red Crescent has streamlined Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) as well as Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) in all activities. Afghan Red Crescent has included vulnerability criteria such as, seniors with responsibility for children, households headed by widows or single mothers with young children, households with chronically ill members, households with a member living with a disability and households with pregnant and lactating women, for prioritizing assistance in the communities. The operation is reaching different layers of the community such as supporting marastoons (social welfare centres) as well as single-parent households in addressing their livelihood needs. Women play a significant role in Afghan Red Crescent programmes as they are both service receivers and providers. Women service providers are essential, especially for the health clinics, and shelters for vulnerable communities and children. Afghan Red Crescent mobilized female staff as part of Mobile Health Teams (MHT's) to deliver services in the field.



Health and wellbeing

Guiding and accompanying Afghan Red Crescent in engaging with the Ministry of Public Health in formulating national health priorities and strengthening the auxiliary role for health services

IFRC provides technical assistance to the Afghan Red Crescent's health department, to strengthen the auxiliary role of the Afghan Red Crescent in the national health sector. The Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC support primary health care services such as outpatients, communicable and non-communicable diseases (acute watery diarrhoea, pelvic inflammatory disease, urinary tract infection, hypertension, obstetric and neonatal care, reproductive health services (family planning and antenatal and postnatal care), health education, dressing, referral, and routine immunization services.

IFRC provides technical support to the Afghan Red Crescent health team in different national health platforms, decision-making working groups, and meetings led or called by the Ministry of Public Health, including central and regional Health Cluster Meetings, the Expanded Programme on Immunization and the National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).

The Afghan Red Crescent representatives actively participate in decision-making meetings with the EOC to identify priorities and effective interventions for appropriate planning, implementation, and monitoring of polio eradication and routine immunization (RI) activities. The Afghan Red Crescent health team supports the EOC and relevant partners at the central and regional levels to identify and prioritize underserved and high-risk areas and finalize the microplanning process.

Scaling up community-based health and first aid

Afghan Red Crescent is implementing a community-based health project with support of IFRC in Badghis, Herat and Kabul provinces. Key achievements of the project include:

- Updating training manuals and information education and communication (IEC) materials and translation into local languages (Pashto and Dari)
 - » Epidemic control for volunteers (ECV) training manual and tool kit is under translation with a slight adaptation of the content
 - » Non-communicable disease (NCD) implementation and facilitator guide for healthy lifestyles
 - » First aid guideline for Afghan Red Crescent Community Based First Aid (CBHFA) community volunteers is under revision and adaptation
 - » A separate training guideline for first aid in schools is in development
- Baseline survey of the project is in progress
- Preparation of community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) training for Afghan Red Crescent female staff and volunteers is at its final stage

The Afghan Red Crescent continued to provide treatment for people living with congenital heart defects. It is the only organization that provides treatment for congenital heart defects in Afghanistan.

Afghan Red Crescent is active in the field of immunization through MHTs providing vaccination and primary healthcare packages in underserved areas.

Red Cross Red Crescent induction training was conducted for 48 people, including 16 female staff of mobile health teams for Kandahar and Helmand. The training covered topics such as the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's mandates, principles and values in action, Protection, Gender and Inclusion and health management information system (HMIS)

An expanded programme for immunization training was conducted for 12 mobile health teams nurses for 12 days in Kandahar and Nangahar. The training qualified the MHTs nurses to give Ministry of Health vaccines to persons who are referred to the MHTs in hard-to-reach areas

Scaling up the WASH in schools programme which comprises the construction of WASH facilities, provision of WASH items for girls and hygiene promotion to include nearby communities

Communication is ongoing with the Ministry of Education (MoE) on implementing WASH in Schools (WinS) in 2023. The list of targeted schools, the approved designs and the procurement Bill of Quantities (BoQ)s have been received from the MoE. The procurement process for construction work is under way by IFRC logistics, supported by IFRC's shelter delegate. Procurement of other items connected with WASH in schools include, 2,500 schoolgirls' hygiene kits, WASH clubs' items, hygienic materials and mechanical toolkits. The procurement process will be completed in the next reporting period.

WASH in the community

The booklet for household water treatment (HHWT) and the leaflet for hygiene promotion was revised and printing started (5,000 copies). Afghan Red Crescent worked with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a long-term partnership between the two entities. This partnership will enable Afghan Red Crescent to implement the planned WASH interventions all over the country. Procurement of mini hygiene kits (4,500 kits) was initiated and is in process by IFRC logistics. These kits will be distributed during the awareness raising sessions on hygiene promotion to the participants.

Strengthening the delivery of primary health, immunization, maternal and child health, and emergency health services through static and mobile health facilities

In the first half of 2023, Afghan Red Crescent operated 212 health facilities. They comprised one district hospital, 46 basic health centres, one community health centre, 23 sub-health centres, 101 mobile health teams (MHT) and emergency MHT (EMHT), and 40 health camps.

Implementing mental health and psychosocial support interventions in communities and schools as well as for responders

Within the scope of 12 MHTs operating in Helmand, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces, Afghan Red Crescent deployed a team of 24 psychosocial workers with the support of Danish Red Cross. They extended basic mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to communities in remote areas. During this reporting cycle, a total of 8,698 people received assistance through psychological first aid (PFA), awareness-raising sessions, psychoeducation, and referrals to specialized services. Among them, 311 individuals were, Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs), 6,718 male, and 7,993 female. As part of the expansion plans, services are slated to reach two new districts in Nangarhar province and two in Herat. This expansion will entail the establishment of four additional MHTs and the recruitment of eight more psychosocial workers.

In Nangarhar, a dedicated team of 20 trained volunteers (10 male and 10 female) successfully engaged with 791 children within child-friendly spaces (CFS) at Chamtala and Sheikh Misri internally displaced people (IDP) sites. The focus of these activities predominantly centred on young boys and girls up to the age of 12, encompassing play, social, learning, and recreational activities. Furthermore, 1,387 children, including 48 living with disabilities, participated in play and recreational activities within communities through the Mobile Health Teams and Child Friendly Spaces (CFS's).

These CFSs functioned as focal points for the provision of MHPSS services, acting as hubs from which volunteers conducted outreach, home visits, awareness-raising sessions, and psychoeducation. The strategic intent is to transform these CFSs into multifaceted community centres, offering services tailored to various demographic segments, including women and girls. Presently, these spaces primarily cater to activities involving children and young men, occasionally extending to males of all ages. However, activities specifically designed for women and young girls are not yet in place. As an interim measure to address the distress experienced by women and girls, interventions primarily take the form of home visits and awareness-raising sessions.

Concerted efforts in awareness-raising and psychoeducation were organized in collaboration with community and religious leaders, targeting individuals and families with mental health and psychosocial concerns. Notably, a total of 3,063 individuals (comprising 1,552 male and 1,511 female) took part in these sessions, which also involved 77 people living with disabilities (PLWD's). Identification of these people was facilitated through outreach initiatives and awareness-raising sessions. Support was subsequently delivered through home visits conducted by volunteers. This initiative yielded positive outcomes, with 41 people living with disabilities, 289 males, and 469 females received support, reaching a cumulative total of 759 people.

■ **IFRC network joint support**

Danish Red Cross: As part of community-based service delivery, 30 volunteers (15 male and 15 female) were trained in Muhmand Dara district of Nangarhar province, with Danish Red Cross support. Female volunteers are recruited under the concept of grandmother's committees (GMCs) and these volunteers contribute to the referral system, health promotion and mental health and psychosocial support and mobile health teams in that district.

During the period of reporting, with Danish Red Cross support, 91,045 people (40,431 male and 50,614 female) were reached with 12 Afghan Red Crescent mobile health teams in three provinces: Nangarhar, Kandahar Helmand (see also Ongoing Emergency Response section).

The Danish Red Cross will provide support for the establishment of three new child friendly spaces (CFS's) and community centres, strategically situated in Helmand, Kandahar, and Nangarhar provinces. The centres in Helmand and Kandahar will be located in the same district where the ICRC has been supporting counselling services at the basic health care level, which will help provide a continuous level of care. These newly recruited volunteers will carry out play, social and recreational activities, outreach, home visits, psychoeducation and awareness raising, as well as referrals for people with mental health and psychosocial concerns, directing them to appropriate counselling services.

Danish Red Cross is actively engaged in supporting MHPSS services in both Kabul and Kandahar marastoons, where two psychosocial workers implement social and recreational activities designed for women struggling with mental health conditions. During this reporting period, 82 people, all suffering with mental health conditions, participated in PSS activities within Kabul marastoon. At the same time, 24 families residing in Kandahar marastoon received psychological first aid (PFA), awareness-raising sessions, and psychoeducation assistance.

During the initial half-year period, the collaborative efforts of Afghan Red Crescent and Danish Red Cross led to the successful training of 52 staff and volunteers, including members of Mobile Health Teams, livelihood and health staff, and MHPSS volunteers. The training modules encompassed Psychological First Aid, Protection, Gender and Inclusion, and safe referral. These trainings are expected to continue in the forthcoming reporting phase, thus ensuring ongoing development and capacity-building.

Norwegian Red Cross: During the reporting period, with the support of Norwegian Red Cross, Afghan Red Crescent reached 1,079,979 people with primary health and care services (see also Ongoing Emergency Response section).



Migration and displacement

IDPs and returnees are included in all interventions since they fall under the Afghan Red Crescent selection criteria.

The IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent are providing conditional cash (USD 2,620) and technical support to each of 305 households displaced by the June 2022 earthquake for transitional shelter support in Spira district of Khost and Gayan and Barmal districts of Paktika province.



Values, power and inclusion

Mainstreaming of CEA and PGI minimum standards in migration and displacement programming

- IFRC Afghanistan country delegation conducted an in-house training session on aid diversion, fraud and corruption prevention, procurement fraud, and due diligence training and for all its staff.
- All IFRC staff have completed an online sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) training. In addition to completing the online mandatory courses, staff of the country delegation also attended four sessions on integrity, facilitated by one of the IFRC's senior field investigators.
- Risk, compliance and safeguarding staff including are in place in the IFRC's country delegation.
- Afghan Red Crescent has been supporting people displaced by the disasters and crises. Afghan Red Crescent has included vulnerability criteria to target assistance to the most vulnerable. The criteria are, seniors with responsibility for children, households headed by widows or single mothers with young children, households with chronically ill members, households with a member living with a disability and households with pregnant and lactating women for prioritizing assistance in the communities.
- Afghan Red Crescent is reaching single-parent households and women who play a significant role in Afghan Red Crescent programmes as they are both service receivers and providers. Women service providers are essential, especially for the health clinics, and shelters for vulnerable communities and children. Afghan Red Crescent mobilized female staff as part of MHTs to deliver services in the field.

Establish women-led support activities in Afghan Red Crescent to engage young women in service delivery

In Afghanistan, women are served by women. Afghan Red Crescent has been mobilizing skilled and trained female staff and volunteers to provide services to women in community. Some examples of such mobilization include:

- Female medical staff and volunteers who provide primary health and care services to women and children through MHTs and community health programme in the field
- 14 trained shelter volunteers were mobilized in Khost and Paktika from female headed households to conduct sessions on six key messages of 'build back safer'
- Female staff and volunteers have been mobilised in the cash-based assistance to women across 34 provinces of the country
- Female facilitators from the professional organization hired by IFRC provided vocational training to 20 women in Kabul and Kandahar *marastoons*

Enhancing programme quality and accountability across migration and displacement interventions

Afghan Red Crescent, together with Red Cross Red Crescent partners have been carrying out the following activities to support quality and accountability in the interventions:

- Community/stakeholder engagement following the selection of the intervention area/recipient
- Exit surveys during distribution of both cash and in-kind support
- Establishment of complaint/feedback desk at distribution points
- Banner display in local language with types and number of items per package or total amount of cash being provided at the distribution points
- Afghan Red Crescent volunteers carry out household visits with health and hygiene messages in the community-based health interventions and they also collect any feedback/complaints from the households and share with project team
- Post distribution monitoring for either cash or in-kind support
- Field monitoring visit by the project/operation staff, volunteers and leadership
- Distribution site monitoring
- Joint monitoring
- Midterm and final evaluations

Implementing interventions to strengthen the economic resilience of widows

With the support of IFRC, Afghan Red Crescent has been distributing cash to 24,000 households with people at risk, especially widow-headed households in 34 provinces. Each household is receiving AFN 8,500 (CHF 85) which will cover 100 percent of the cost of a monthly food basket for a family of seven.

Twenty women from Kabul and Kandahar *marastoons* received vocational training in the first half of 2023. In addition to financial support for the training, Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC provided AFN 75 per day to each participant for refreshments. All the women will be provided with grants of USD 2,000 equivalent each as seed capital for starting their businesses.

■ IFRC Network joint support

Danish Red Cross: Afghan Red Crescent with the support of Danish Red Cross supported 275 female-headed households with tailoring, poultry farming and vocational trainings in Kandahar province. The intervention is aiming to empower destitute women and widows under the Afghan Red Crescent *marastoon*.

The MHPSS team, with the support of Danish Red Cross, conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with women and girls, focusing on MHPSS and protection. The findings underscored that a significant number of women within communities lack spaces for meaningful social interaction, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. These women expressed a keen interest to participate in group activities, particularly those related to arts and crafts, simple social engagements, and skill-building, including vocational training. Recognising this need, the Afghan Red Crescent MHPSS team is engaged in discussions with community leaders to explore the feasibility of introducing social activities tailored for women and young girls. While 10 female volunteers currently support the Nangahar team to facilitate women and girls' activities, the Kandahar team is advocating for the recruitment of female volunteers within child friendly spaces.

Turkish Red Crescent: With the support of IFRC and Turkish Red Crescent, Afghan Red Crescent is renovating its existing *marastoon* in three provinces (Balkh, Herat and Kabul)

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS



Strategic and operational coordination

External coordination

Afghan Red Crescent is maintaining close coordination with the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), the Ministry of Public Health and local authorities in line with its role as auxiliary to public authorities while maintaining neutral and independent humanitarian action. Afghan Red Crescent is working closely with the Ministry of Public Health on the mobilization of healthcare personnel, medicines, and medical equipment. The IFRC country delegation supports briefing sessions and sharing of information with government and institutional donors.

IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent continue to engage in advocacy, humanitarian diplomacy, and coordination with other humanitarian actors, including agencies in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The IFRC is an observer to the HCT and an active participant in the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT) and relevant Cluster or Inter-Agency Working Group meetings/forums. These platforms are useful for information sharing, planning, analysis, and strategic coordination.

IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent have engaged regularly with Kabul based embassies and key stakeholders to keep them informed of the latest developments at Afghan Red Crescent. In these meetings, IFRC gave a presentation on the new strategic priorities of Afghan Red Crescent. These included the need to re-focus priorities on the most vulnerable groups in Afghanistan, such as women at-risk and including war widows, people with mental health conditions due to result of decades of warfare and children's health and the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, such as children with congenital heart defects, etc.

Membership coordination

In-country partners engaged within the framework of IFRC's New Way of Working throughout the reporting period. Some participating National Societies agreed to pursue shared leadership in the implementation of the IFRC's Emergency Appeal operation, leveraging their expertise, knowledge, and technical capacities.

IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent planned frequent calls with participating National Societies to keep them updated on the most current humanitarian situation on the ground, the evolving operational context, and to highlight any new risks in security or the overall operations. These calls have been well received by Participating National Societies as they provide information on ground realities which supports participating National Societies in their internal discussions on Afghanistan and in influencing engagements with their back donors.

Movement coordination and cooperation

Movement partners in-country continue to coordinate closely in line with existing Movement Coordination and Cooperation mechanisms anchored under a Movement Cooperation Agreement (MCA). An Emergency Response Taskforce (ERT) has taken responsibility for developing and monitoring the Afghan Red Crescent operational strategy, with Afghan Red Crescent at the centre and the IFRC Secretariat providing strategic coordination for the benefit of the IFRC's membership.

Representation of the IFRC network in these forums is using a pragmatic approach, for instance, Danish Red Cross is representing the IFRC network in Child Protection and MHPSS Working Groups.

Shelter Cluster Coordination

Afghan Red Crescent and its partners are currently engaging with the emergency shelter and non-food item cluster and the authorities in planning support for shelter repairs and rebuilding. The shelter intervention followed the agreed model and the common minimum standards of the Shelter Cluster. The process also adopted indigenous practices of the community, maintaining social cohesion, cultural norms, and traditions of the people throughout the shelter interventions.

IFRC is continuing its coordination and taking part in different meetings with the Shelter Cluster. The Shelter Cluster holds meetings on a monthly basis and during the reporting period, five meetings were held and IFRC participated in

each of them. The meetings provided a platform for Shelter Cluster members to share progress, discuss challenges and new guidelines and share information on what the partners were doing in terms of shelter intervention.

The IFRC has maintained strong coordination with the Shelter Cluster in terms of filling gaps for shelter support and is providing updates to the Cluster on a regular basis. IFRC coordinated with Miyamoto International in providing trainings to 11 engineers and 25 masons. As a result, all Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC shelter staff are now fully trained, and there is a pool of trained people ready to carry out the shelter intervention.

The IFRC shelter team provided their inputs into the development of key messages and also their support to Miyamoto International for the translation of key messages from English to Pashto. The six key messages, which are being disseminated in the community, were developed by the Shelter Cluster partners including IFRC and they focus on the regional traditional vernacular construction practices of Afghanistan. Some of the buildings stood robust against the earthquake because they were developed following traditional construction practices. However, some of the poor construction practices led to life-critical failures. To mitigate these failures, six key technical messages were developed based on local know-how, materials, and existing culture.



National Society Development

Operationalizing the Afghan Red Crescent Strategic Plan 2021–2025 by developing a consolidated operational plan and engaging key stakeholders in a partnership meeting which results in agreed outcomes

During the reporting period, Afghan Red Crescent developed a consolidated operational plan 2022–2024 (March) engaging Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners in Afghanistan.

The IFRC deployed a membership services adviser on multiple missions to support Afghan Red Crescent on a wide range of national society development areas. These include a revision of Afghan Red Crescent's Statutes and Law, completion of their Strategic Plan 2021–2025 and Operational Plan 2022–2024, development of a National Society Development (NSD) Initiative and an NSD Roadmap to accelerate organizational strengthening.

An NSD Delegate has been selected and will be on board from August to support Afghan Red Crescent, in close collaboration with the ICRC and participating National Societies, in moving forward with an NSD Roadmap with a view to accelerating organizational strengthening. Danish Red Cross has secured financial resources to support Afghan Red Crescent's NSD efforts in a coordinated manner to optimize results.

Orientation of Afghan Red Crescent senior management and staff

Afghan Red Crescent has undergone a change process since late 2021, with more than 90 per cent of senior managers at headquarters, regional, and branch levels new to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. A key priority has been to provide orientation for the new senior managers about the Movement Principles, key IFRC policies and procedures, and humanitarian standards. During May, Afghan Red Crescent held its General Management Meeting which brought together senior managers from headquarters, regional, and branch levels. As part of the week-long meeting, the IFRC Country Delegation organized orientation sessions for Afghan Red Crescent managers covering various topics, among them the IFRC Constitution, IFRC governance structure, Movement and IFRC statutory meetings, policies on fraud and corruption prevention, integrity, and safeguarding. The IFRC Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) provided a facilitator.

Strengthening local branches of Afghan Red Crescent

Afghan Red Crescent conducted a three-day planning and reporting training for 23 staff in the northeast and north regions. The main objective of the training was to develop the capacity of branch staff on planning tools including log frames, results-based management and reporting as well as to orient them on planning and reporting templates.

Since 1 May 2023, IFRC has in place a Field Engagement Coordinator whose tasks include regular visits to IFRC base units (regional offices and branches) to identify issues of concern and their branch development needs. IFRC has also supported various branches with Internet connectivity and vehicles.

Pre-positioning of relief items and winterization kits in strategic locations,

Stocks of winterization kits, tarps, tents, water storage containers, hygiene supplies, cooking utensils, and other essential household items are being pre-positioned in strategic locations across the country. Please refer to table 4 for details of the items.

Table 5 List of items for preposition

Item	Unit of measurement	Quantity	Targeted Regions
Blankets	Pcs	8,400	Central Northwest (1,800 Pcs); Southwest (3,000 Pcs); East (2,400) Pcs; Central Southwest (1,200 Pcs) Regions
Jerrycans	Pcs	2,800	Central Northwest (600 Pcs); Southwest (1,000 Pcs); East (800) Pcs; Central Southwest (400 Pcs) Regions
Tarpaulin	Pcs	2,800	Central Northwest (600 Pcs); Southwest (1,000 Pcs); East (800) Pcs; Central Southwest (400 Pcs) Regions

Afghan Red Crescent disaster response teams are being equipped with updated data collection kits, identification materials, and refresher training. During the reporting period, with the support of IFRC Secretariat, Afghan Red Crescent conducted five branch disaster response team (BDRT) trainings for 126 staff and volunteers in Khost, Logar, Paktika, Parwan and Wardak provinces. Three disaster response unit (DRU) trainings were carried out for 75 staff and volunteers in east, central north and north regions. Details of the trainings have been provided in table 5.

Table 6 Disaster response trainings

BDRT	February	6	Paktika	Staff/volunteers	25
BDRT	May	6	Khost	Staff/volunteers	25
BDRT	June	6	Logar	Staff/volunteers	25
BDRT	July	6	Wardak	Staff/volunteers	25
DRU	April	6	Central North region	Staff/volunteers	2
DRU	May	6	East region	Staff/volunteers	25
DRU	Aug	6	North region	Staff/volunteers	25

Afghan Red Crescent is conducting a National Disaster Response Team training in October 2023.



Humanitarian diplomacy

The IFRC supports the Afghan Red Crescent in its communication functions both internally and externally. IFRC also published an [online statement](#) following the ban on women in education and the workplace in December 2022. It continues its work by engaging privately with relevant authorities on this matter. In addition, the IFRC made a call to the international community on providing long-term solutions through this [Op-Ed piece](#). The IFRC keeps its partners and donors updated on Afghanistan-related matters through internal communication alongside consultation with the Afghan Red Crescent leadership.

IFRC issued an in-depth story on Afghanistan which can be found [here](#), highlighting its work on the ground through the Mobile Health teams. The IFRC is also supporting the Afghan Red Crescent communications team in procuring basic equipment for generating content from the field and in sharing information.

The IFRC along with Afghan Red Crescent Leadership engaged in advocacy and influencing missions in Doha, Qatar where most Embassies that represent Afghanistan are outposted. Private meetings were held with several of the missions based in Doha. Top line discussions were around the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, focusing on evolving context and new developments between December 2022 to May 2023, and new strategic priorities of Afghan Red Crescent. Emphasis was placed on the humanitarian/development nexus, including the need to re-focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as women at-risk including war widows, people with mental health conditions due to result of decades of warfare and children's health and the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, including children

with congenital heart defects. The IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent advocated for the prioritization of Grand Bargain commitments, including channelling of support through local actors who are well established, efficient, and accepted on the ground.

The IFRC participated in the World Bank /Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARFT) Roundtable Discussion: Tackling fragility and building institutions (Afghanistan) – examination of the World Bank’s experience over the past 20 years in building institutions and tackling fragility in Afghanistan.

A communications training was conducted for Afghan Red Crescent branch staff from 34 branches (at least 50 participants) held in Afghan Red Crescent headquarters. The strategic engagement and partnership/ humanitarian diplomacy (HD) team conducted a briefing on HD in action – what it means to have a seat at the table and how can Afghan Red Crescent can influence aid policies effectively internally and externally at both the local, national, and international levels.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Institutionalizing fraud and corruption prevention

Since late 2021, Afghan Red Crescent and IFRC agreed that the latter would handle the bulk of procurement relating to international financing channelled via the IFRC Emergency Appeal and Unified Plan for Afghanistan. The IFRC country delegation has well-established procurement procedures and systems to ensure procurement is open, fair, competitive and transparent. The country delegation’s procurement processes follow the global IFRC procurement procedures. In compliance with its internal policies, IFRC screens its staff and suppliers in Afghanistan against UN sanctions lists. It also undertakes its own screening of all new Afghan Red Crescent staff at both headquarters and branch levels. All IFRC project managers have been trained in fraud and corruption, with training for new staff to be done within a month of joining. IFRC screens all individuals and vendors paid by Afghan Red Crescent with funds from IFRC and supports Afghan Red Crescent to ensure that sanctioned individuals are not responsible for the management of IFRC funds and resources.

The IFRC country delegation has ensured that there is a 100 per cent completion rate of IFRC online mandatory courses. These include courses to ensure shared understanding about of the IFRC Child Protection Policy, Policy on the Prevention and Response to Workplace Harassment and Discrimination, Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Control Policy, and Security Regulations. Awareness on the integrity hot line, the IFRC whistleblowing and case management system, is reinforced with posters in the corridors as well as during staff meetings. From May, the country delegation has a dedicated risk and compliance team responsible for reinforcing the systems of financial controls and risk management. The team will also work with the Afghan Red Crescent’s audit and compliance department to regularly review all transactions and processes for compliance.

Institutionalizing risk management practices

The compliance, risk management and safeguarding unit is maintaining the Risk Register for Afghanistan country delegation and will review and update it regularly basis. IFRC also aims to review and update it before end of the 2023.

With the safeguarding officer now onboard, IFRC will be able to engage more with the National Society on safeguarding policy implementation, and for better understanding and coordination to engage with other working partners present in the country.

Strengthening safeguarding and improving duty of care

Adequate measures were taken to ensure the safety and security of all Red Cross Red Crescent personnel involved in this operation. The IFRC country delegation security team is maintaining close coordination with external humanitarian actors in-country on the situation, particularly in the earthquake-affected areas. The security team is maintaining close coordination with the Afghan Red Crescent units and local administrations in the operational areas. The National Society’s security framework is applicable throughout the operation to their staff and volunteers. For personnel under the IFRC security’s responsibility, including surge support and integrated Participating National Societies deployed to the area, the existing IFRC country security plan, including security regulations, contingency plans for medical

emergencies, relocation and critical incident management, are applicable. Any field missions undertaken by IFRC personnel follow the current IFRC travel approval process, current health advisories and business continuity planning (BCP) guidance regarding COVID-19.

Security assessments and plans in the two operational areas including enhancement of security protocols in-country in coordination with all in-country partners were carried out. The security department maintained and followed an enhanced Federation-wide risk management process, risk register, contingency planning, and business continuity plan for Afghanistan. All IFRC, and Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers are encouraged, to complete the IFRC Stay Safe 2.0 e-learning courses.

Engaging a third-party entity for independent monitoring

IFRC is hiring a firm for third-party monitoring (TPM) of humanitarian assistance. The primary purpose of the TPM's is to establish an independent monitoring system that ensures vertical, horizontal, and parallel accountability and transparency within the Afghan Red Crescent/IFRC project/ implementation/operation management cycle. The TPM team will conduct exit interviews, site observation and post distribution monitoring to verify whether projects/operation are being implemented as per the proposals/operation strategy and check compliance on the implementation of safeguarding protocols and donor requirements. The team will facilitate lessons learned and capture best practices, identify challenges, and recommend corrective actions that will address the needs of the affected population appropriately and efficiently.

Expanding the feedback response mechanism

Afghan Red Crescent established a feedback desk and carries out exit surveys at distribution points to collect complaints and feedback from the people receiving cash or in-kind items. Likewise, IFRC and Afghan Red Crescent set up a hot line feedback response mechanism in cash based assistance from August 2023. A total of 18 complaints/ feedback were registered and responded to in August 2023.

Scaling up digital transformation of Afghan Red Crescent at national and subnational levels

IFRC supported Afghan Red Crescent to fast-track the National Society's digital transformation agenda at headquarters, regional and branch levels. Afghan Red Crescent aims to build up the governance, management and accountability systems, branch development, communication, and resource mobilization of the National Society through engagement in digital transformation.

With the support of IFRC, the following digital transformation projects were successfully carried out during the reporting period for Afghan Red Crescent:

- Supported Afghan Red Crescent in procurement, deployment and implementation of institutionalized email system and Microsoft Office 365 in Afghan Red Crescent headquarters and branch offices
- Strengthened the Afghan Red Crescent CCTV system with procurement of the required CCTV equipment
- Enhanced the technical capacity for Afghan Red Crescent information technology staff by supporting them in physical Microsoft 365 training in Malaysia and as well supporting Afghan Red Crescent's participation in IFRC's global innovation summit in Kenya
- Supported Afghan Red Crescent in procurement of 340 tablets for enhancing their capacity for data collection
- Co-led the Movement coordination in support of enhancing digitalization capacity of Afghan Red Crescent.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

DATA SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- **Timeframe and alignment:** The reporting timeframe for this overview is covering the period from 1 January to 30 June 2023. However, due to the diversity of the IFRC and differences in fiscal years, this coverage may not fully align for some National Societies. Mid-year reporting data may have been based on estimations, with plans to submit more robust numbers at the annual reporting stage.
- **Missing data and breakdowns:** National Societies have diverse data collection systems and processes that may not align with the standardized indicators. Data may not be available for some indicators, for some National Societies. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under or over-estimation of the efforts led by all.
- **Reporting bias:** The data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) and which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\) data](#)
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- [Evaluations database](#)

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