



Tailoring technical and vocational training courses for refugee women @UNHCR/S.Rich

HIGHLIGHTS

657

Refugees repatriated in 2016

375

Refugees departed for resettlement in 2016

Above 350,000*

Afghan and Iraqi students enrolled in the 2015-2016 academic year

1,740

Refugees targeted for Vocational trainings in 2016

Population of concern

A total of **979,410**** people

By country of origin

Country	Number of Refugees
Afghanistan	951,142
Iraq	28,268
Total	979,410

Funding for 2016

USD 70.66 Million requested

USD 12.26 Million contributions

17.36% funded

UNHCR Presence

Staff:

Regular: **97** national/**13** international

Affiliated-Project: **34** national/**2** international

Offices:

6 offices located in:

Tehran, Kerman, Mashhad, Shiraz, Esfahan, Dogharoun



* Not all Afghan and Iraqi students enrolled are Amayesh card holders.

** Based on the Amayesh IX statistics received from the Government in May 2015.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- The Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) is UNHCR's main operational Government counterpart. Additionally, it has partnership project agreements with other partners including, **Governmental:** Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organization (FRWO), Ministry of Education (MoE), Literacy Movement Organization (LMO), Ministry of Health (MoH), State Welfare Organization of Iran (SWO), Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO), Iran Health Insurance Organization (IHIO); **National NGOs:** Association for Protection of Refugee Women and Children (HAMI), Society to Protect Children Suffering from Cancer (MAHAK), Society for Recovery Support (SRS), Rebirth Charity Organization (Rebirth), World Relief Foundation (WRF), Kowsar Scientific and Cultural Foundations (Kowsar); **UN Agencies:** UNHCR also coordinates with a number of sister UN agencies, as well as NGOs and international organizations under the umbrella of the SSAR. In 2016, UNHCR continues to collaborate with a network of partners and be engaged in the implementation of joint activities.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)

- The SSAR is a quadripartite multi-year regional strategy between Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and UNHCR that was launched in 2012 aimed at ensuring the protection of Afghan refugees, and finding solutions for them. Five outcomes guide the strategy in Iran: 1. Voluntary repatriation; 2. Essential Services and Shelter; 3. Livelihood and Food Security; 4. Protection and Resettlement; and, 5. Coordination and Support.
- On 6 – 7 October 2015, the High-Level Segment on the Afghan refugee situation that was held during UNHCR's 66th Executive Committee meeting in Geneva called upon the international community to support Afghanistan in its commitment to create the necessary conditions for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration, and implement lasting solutions for Afghan refugees within the framework of the SSAR through supporting concrete initiatives in the respective national project portfolios. The updated 2015-16 country portfolios for Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan were officially launched at a side event on 7 October 2015.

Protection

- **Community-based approaches:** UNHCR continues to reach out to communities and include them as equal partners in assessing, designing and implementing programmes. Community visits allow UNHCR to better understand the concerns of refugees and identify the most vulnerable individuals who need assistance. In Kerman and Shiraz, UNHCR and the government have encouraged refugee youth to design and implement projects that would reduce child labour, improve hygiene and ensure more children attend school, and in all AORs community based/led projects are under development.
- **Registration:** The Government of Iran is responsible for refugee registration and refugee status determination. It issues 'Amayesh' identification cards to refugees that enable refugees to access basic services, facilitate the issuance of work permits and seek durable solutions. In addition 620,000 Afghan passport holders who were previously undocumented or Amayesh cardholders have been issued with Iranian visas that allow them to reside in the country. The government estimates that there remains between 1.5 - 2 million undocumented Afghans in Iran.
- **Protection against violence and exploitation:** Harm prevention activities to benefit communities in relation to substance use together with a robust response to victims of violence (e.g. sexual and gender-based violence) have been established by the government and UNHCR. Assistance to persons with specific needs, especially the elderly and the disabled has furthermore been enhanced, not least with the support of the State Welfare Organisation (SWO).
- **Secondary Movement:** Over the course of 2015, a number of Afghans moved illegally to Europe – they either used Iran as a transit country, or had resided in Iran for some years before undertaking this journey. The government stepped up its border security to curb these efforts that place Afghans, including refugees, at immense risk due to the hazardous journey where they are often exploited by smugglers and traffickers. Movements however continue in 2016 and UNHCR and BAFIA have agreed to commence a study of the situation.
- **Durable Solutions:** UNHCR facilitates the voluntary repatriation of Afghans and Iraqis throughout the country. However, due to the deteriorating economic and security situation in Afghanistan and in Iraq, the number of refugees volunteering to repatriate has decreased over the years. 889 refugees with specific needs and/or protection concerns were resettled to third countries during 2015, and so far in 375 refugees were resettled in 2016.

Education

- In 2016, UNHCR will support the Government with the **construction of four schools** to benefit refugee and host communities. Additionally, UNHCR in partnership with the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO), will provide **literacy classes** for more than 3,000 adults and over-aged children.
- Following a decree by the Supreme Leader in 2015 that **all children must attend school** regardless of documentation status, 48,000 undocumented Afghans were able to register for formal education in Iran and more are expected enrol in 2016.

- In line with UNHCR's Global Education Strategy and in partnership with the Ministry of Education, UNHCR will continue to support **access to primary and secondary education** of over 360,000 refugee students, and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable refugees.

Health

- Primary Health Care (PHC): Throughout recent years UNHCR has complemented the efforts of the Ministry of Health in providing **PHC services to all refugees**, including vaccinations, antenatal care, maternal and child health, and family planning.
- Other UNHCR joint interventions include medical referral, harm reduction, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention, and Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR).
- Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI): Under an agreement in 2015 between UNHCR, BAFIA and IHIO, and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MOH), all registered refugees residing in Iran had access to the Salamat Insurance Scheme and benefit from a **health insurance package** for hospitalization similar to Iranian nationals. Simultaneously, those refugees who suffer from Special Diseases (SD)¹ benefited from comprehensive insurance coverage. Access to the UPHI addresses the issue of refugees' health security as well as the financial challenges with regard to the costs of health care services, in particular when surgery or hospitalization is involved. The first phase of the implementation has been completed and currently the Government of Iran and UNHCR have been negotiating the second phase of the Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) for refugees.

Self-Reliance

- In recent years there has been a positive shift in the Government of Iran's view towards offering refugees **livelihoods training** opportunities. Recognising that refugees should be empowered to earn an adequate and sustainable living during their stay in Iran, the government has come to support the fact that enhancing training opportunities available to refugees will also allow them to employ these newly acquired skillsets in their country of origin should they return.
- UNHCR is collaborating with Government of Iran and non-governmental partners such as TVTO, FRWO, Kowsar, and WRF to implement a diverse portfolio of **livelihoods interventions targeting more than 3,000 refugees per year**. These include technical and vocational training, community-based rehabilitation of natural resources, establishment of home-based enterprises, and access to revolving and micro credit loans. As part of its projects of direct implementation, UNHCR also provides equipment for income-generating activities while looking into possible cross-border initiatives and interventions when the security situation is conducive which will be aimed at linking knowledge, skills and refugees in Iran with job opportunities in Afghanistan.
- UNHCR supports both direct and joint interventions with partners at three different levels (policy, organisation, and individual/community) to enhance refugees' financial, human and social capital and to promote **self-reliance and economic empowerment**.

Cash Based Interventions

- **UNHCR is implementing cash based interventions (CBIs) targeting vulnerable refugees** in dire financial situations as a safety net to meet their protection and assistance needs. CBIs are used to access to higher education and healthcare, to support shelter needs and persons with disabilities, and to provide for transportation in the case of voluntary return, assisting also in covering basic needs prior to resettlement. In exceptional cases, multi-purpose cash assistance can also be provided. UNHCR is currently exploring further ways to diversify its cash based interventions.

Shelter and Infrastructure

- In an effort to improve refugees' access to essential services (shelter, water, domestic energy, sanitation, community halls to enhance refugee engagement and empowerment etc.) UNHCR continues to invest in **critical infrastructure in the most populated settlements and urban areas** which are hosting refugee populations. UNHCR interventions also aim to support and complement the efforts of BAFIA and other agencies involved in Iran's refugee programme.

UNHCR is grateful for the generous global donor contributions of 2016, as well as the following donors who have directly contributed to the Iran operation: [Denmark](#) | [European Union \(DG DEVCO\)](#) | [Germany](#) | [Japan](#) | [Republic of Korea](#) | [Russian Federation](#) | [Education Above All Foundation](#) | [Private Donors in Iran](#)