

Annual Results Report

2022

Islamic Republic of Iran

Acknowledgements

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Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to be one of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries, having provided refuge to Afghans fleeing conflict and seeking international protection for over forty years. In 2022, the Government of Iran undertook a headcount of all undocumented Afghan nationals, including those who newly arrived in Iran in 2021. A reported 2.6 million Afghans participated in this exercise and received a 'headcount slip' providing them with a form of temporary protection. In addition to this, some 762,000 refugee cardholders reportedly reside in Iran, of which 750,000 are Afghan Amayesh cardholders and 12,000 are Iraqi Hoviat cardholders. While the final statistics from the government are currently pending, with the inclusion of head counted, UNHCR estimates that some 3.4 million refugees and asylum seekers currently reside in Iran, along with approximately 600,000 Afghan passport holders with Iranian visas (some of whom are previous Amayesh cardholders) and an estimated 500,000 undocumented Afghans who did not participate in the headcount.

In 2022, Iran continued to maintain their inclusive policies by allowing everyone – regardless of status – access to education and health services. However, mounting economic pressures are affecting the most vulnerable communities. Afghans and asylum-seekers, who are among the poorest individuals living in Iran, are finding it almost impossible to make ends meet and are becoming more reliant on humanitarian assistance and support from the government. However, sharp price increases in almost all sectors and services, are posing substantial challenges on the government's ability to maintain its inclusive policies. Greater international responsibility and burden-sharing is needed to support Iran in maintaining their inclusive policies and services and to support UNHCR's programmes to ensure Afghans are not left behind.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

1) By end of 2024, all asylum-seekers have access to asylum systems and refugees and asylum-seekers enjoy improved access to social protection systems and UNHCR services following the adoption of progressive legal policies

From April to June 2022, the Government of Iran undertook a 'headcount' exercise of Afghans in the country. Some 2.6 million (both in situ undocumented and newly arrived) Afghans reportedly participated. This exercise provided participants with basic documentation in the form of a 'headcount slip', giving them with a form of temporary protection against refoulement during the slip's validity period.

In February 2022, UNHCR released a "Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan" which superseded the August 2021 non-return advisory for Afghanistan. However, during the course of 2022, several reports of compulsory returns of mainly single men were noted. UNHCR continues to reiterate the need for an accessible, transparent and fair asylum system, so that those in need of international protection and assistance can get it.

The situation in Afghanistan remains uncertain. The economic downturn in Iran, compounded by the impacts of sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic, has left many refugees and asylum seekers in a precarious situation, heightened existing vulnerabilities and placed more pressure on the government to continue providing services. Durable solutions such as voluntary repatriation and resettlement also remained limited for most people in need.

2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

2) By 2024, inclusive policies of GIRI across all public services (health, education, social protection and financial inclusion) will continue to be maintained and become further refined, affordable and sustainable for refugees and asylum-seekers

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2.2 Proportion of PoCs residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 89.67% | 89.67% |
| 2.3 Proportion of PoC with access to health services | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 90.00% | 92.00% |

All Afghans and Iraqis (regardless of their documentation status) have access to free primary health care similar to nationals countrywide, including vaccination and immunization campaigns, ante- and post-natal care, growth monitoring for children under five, non-communicable disease care and treatment, and family planning. In 2022, UNHCR continued to support health inclusive policies through partnerships with the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA) and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME).

Although secondary and tertiary health care assistance is available to all, the exorbitant costs of these services remain a barrier for most refugees. To mitigate this, since 2015, UNHCR has supported the government-led initiative to provide refugees access to the national Universal Public Health Insurance. In 2022, UNHCR covered the premium fee for 120,000 of the most vulnerable refugees to facilitate their subsidized access to secondary and tertiary health care services. This complemented the 47,000 refugees for whom the Government of Iran covered the insurance premium fee.

Since 2015, all foreign national children, including Afghans and Iraqis (regardless of their documentation status) have access to education in the national system. While the government has maintained their progressive and inclusive education policies, the increased number of Afghan children in Iran following events in Afghanistan in 2021 has put significant strain to the Ministry of Education (MoE). Educational infrastructures are reportedly overstretched, classrooms are overcrowded, and classes have to be done in multiple shifts. Parents from the host community have raised the concern that the quality of education provided to Iranian children, who are studying side-by-side with Afghan students, is also being impacted due to overcrowded schools, which could bring additional challenges to maintaining inclusive policies and peaceful co-existence. Refugee and undocumented students face additional barriers in pursuing an education, such as affordability challenges for costs such as school uniforms and materials, which have to be borne by refugee families who have very little means.

In the spirit of burden-sharing, in 2022 UNHCR has supported the construction of 20 12-classroom schools to partly ease the pressure of accommodating around 800,000 Afghan students. UNHCR also assisted around 7,000 over-aged, out of school children and adults with non-formal literacy training to pave the way for them to re-join formal schooling. UNHCR also distributed 4,506 tablets among refugee and Iranian students to promote access to virtual education learning tools when needed.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

3) By 2024, improved self-sufficiency and self-management is realized by refugees and asylum-seekers as a result of the advancement in inclusive economic policies and access to national social networks and community based mechanisms

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 3.1 Proportion of PoC who have the right to decent work [GCR, 2.1.1] | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 40.00% | 23.53% |
| 3.2a Proportion of PoC enrolled in primary education | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 88.00% | 88.00% |
| 3.2b Proportion of PoC enrolled in secondary education | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 73.00% | 73.00% |

Livelihood and income generation activities were highlighted as critical needs by Afghan and Iraqi refugees living in Iran. Although registered refugees can obtain work permits to work in 87 job categories, opportunities are limited to three sectors, mainly in the field of construction. Temporary work permits also need to be renewed on a yearly basis. As such, the majority of Afghans in Iran need to rely on unstable sources of incomes, mainly by working as daily laborers, in the informal economy. The deteriorating economic situation and shortage of job opportunities has severely eroded refugees' coping mechanisms and increased their vulnerabilities irrespective of their status and location.

To tackle this, UNHCR, in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental partners, implemented a livelihood programme by providing skills training and support for establishing or expanding refugee-run businesses, aimed at building the capacity of refugees and enhancing their self-reliance and resilience. The majority of refugees who benefited from these activities were women, who are more vulnerable. This helped refugees be able to provide for their families while they remain in Iran and make them more prepared for sustainable repatriation and reintegration, once conditions are conducive.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

4) Durable solutions are secured for refugees and asylum-seekers, through a combination of local solutions/inclusion, voluntary return, complementary pathways and resettlement, when appropriate

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin. [RF/GCR 4.2.1] | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 947 | 378 |
| 4.2a Number of PoC who departed on resettlement. [GCR 3.1.1] | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 114 | 153 |
| 4.2b Number of PoC who departed through complementary pathways | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | Unknown | 8 |

In 2022, UNHCR-facilitated voluntary repatriations declined by 57 per cent compared to 2021 mainly due to the growing instability and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

With the support of Government of Iran and resettlement countries, UNHCR scaled up resettlement to protect vulnerable refugees and support Iran in guaranteeing more sustainable solutions. 3,126 refugees were submitted for resettlement with 153 refugees departing last year. Following the success of resettlement upscaling in 2022, initial pledges for resettlement places in 2023 have already exceeded the 2022 quota. The resettlement programme also strengthened collaboration with the government which views resettlement as an important burden sharing mechanism.

To supplement resettlement, complementary pathways, such as family reunification, labor, education mobility and humanitarian admission programmes were explored in 2022. A total of 292 individuals received information, counselling and other logistical support on family reunification procedures, while 40 individuals were provided information on labour, education mobility and humanitarian admission programmes.

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

The situation for refugees and asylum-seekers in the Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to evolve since the events of August 2021 in Afghanistan. The combined impact of the pandemic, ongoing sanctions and an economic downturn in Iran has caused prices essential goods and services to soar, leaving many Afghans unable to meet their basic needs. Systemic barriers to accessing stable livelihoods have exacerbated the situation, diminishing Afghans' ability to become self-sufficient. Given the widespread reliance on informal and daily labour arrangements and the considerable number of households reportedly living below or at the minimum subsistence level, displaced people, especially new arrivals without documentation, are particularly vulnerable.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

The "Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees" (SSAR), which was developed by Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, with the support of UNHCR, and endorsed by the international community in 2012, remains the strategic framework through which UNHCR coordinates its response in Iran. Through it, UNHCR works with the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) under the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other Government counterparts, as well as UN agencies

and national and international NGOs. The SSAR – its Support Platform and Core Group – also serves as the main umbrella under which UNHCR engages with donors. Throughout 2022, UNHCR organized several coordination meetings with all the members involved to exchange achievements, priorities and the way forward.

Following the activation of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) in Iran in 2021, UNHCR consolidated partnerships with various international aid partners principally under the umbrella of the 2022 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Afghanistan Situation. In total, 16 international aid organizations participated in the 2022 RRP – up from 10 under the 2021 Refugee Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan. UNHCR continued to lead coordination under the RCM, convening the Refugee Response Group (RRG) comprising of the main UN agencies and INGOs engaged in the response. In 2022, the RRG provided overall strategic leadership, oversaw joint inter-agency planning and prioritization under the RRP, facilitated joint advocacy (particularly vis-a-vis the government) and developed common operating standards framed by joint operating principles.

Operational coordination among RRP partners continued to be supported through seven sector working groups which facilitated regular information-exchange, operational collaboration in multi-agency response contexts and joint strategic planning (including for the 2023 RRP). UNHCR led three sectors (Protection, Shelter/NFI and Health) and actively participated in all sector working groups as part of an inclusive approach to coordination under the RCM. UNHCR also led inter-sector coordination and convened the Inter-Sector Coordination Group and other inter-sectoral processes. The 5Ws continued to serve as the basis for both operational coordination among partners and the monitoring and reporting framework for the RRP 2022.

Whilst in Iran agencies with a distinct refugee-focus cannot be formally part of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UNHCR worked with other UN agencies to identify and capitalize on the complementarities between the RRP and UNSDCF. This included efforts to explore and expand area-based programmes that benefit refugees and asylum-seekers and their Iranian communities. By strengthening these synergies, UNHCR sought to explore and promote nexus approaches to address the growing needs of vulnerable people in a more sustainable way.

UNHCR continued to enjoy constructive engagement with BAFIA. In 2022, UNHCR also continued to work with 15 partners for project implementation, including six government partners and eight NGO partners.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

1.1 By 2024, national policies will be enacted to enhance access to documentation, legal assistance and legal remedies for persons in need of international protection

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Target (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol. | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate |

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2022, the Iranian Parliament approved the general framework of a draft bill to establish a national migration organization, which intends to strengthen Iran's asylum framework. This draft bill is still under review and may undergo several revisions before being approved and implemented. UNHCR is actively engaged in advocacy interventions related to this key development mostly directed at ensuring it is aligned with the 1951 Convention and other applicable international instruments and standards, inter alia, regarding the right to access territory, seek asylum, and protection from refoulement, as well as safeguards against statelessness, currently provided by the 2019 Nationality Law Amendment which allows children born to Iranian women and non-Iranian men to obtain Iranian nationality. Based on the latest figures publicly available, more than 14,000 children received an Iranian identity booklet under provisions of this law. Reports of deportation of Afghans from Iran continued. While deportations mainly affected mainly undocumented/single men, as registered refugees need to obtain laissez-passers (travel permit) from BAFIA to travel outside their designated province of residence, their failure to do so has sometimes result in deportation.

Based on UNHCR's non-return advisory in August 2021 and Guidance Note on International Protection Needs of people fleeing Afghanistan in February 2022, UNHCR continued to advocate for a halt of the return of Afghans, even those whose asylum applications may have been denied.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

Undocumented Afghans who did not take part in the government-led headcount exercise remained at heightened risk of deportation. UNHCR continued to advocate with BAFIA to re-open the headcount exercise to allow those who could not participate to register and to call against deportations of all Afghans in need of international protection regardless of their documentation status.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

1.2. GBV survivors are identified, have access and are aware of existing/ strengthened support services, including national support systems

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Target (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 4.1 Proportion of PoC who know where to access available GBV services | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | Unknown | 10.00% | 7.00% |

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2022, various awareness raising sessions were conducted by UNHCR to mitigate the increase in various GBV incidents among the refugee population. In addition, under the joint projects with BAFIA and NGO partners, psychological counseling was provided to 220 GBV survivors residing in remote areas. Also, more than 3,000 booklets on the prevention of domestic violence were published and distributed among refugee communities.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

The limited capacity to directly implement GBV services, coupled with the absence of an adequate number of GBV partners and limited engagement with the State Welfare Organization (SWO), reduced the scope of UNHCR's work in GBV prevention, mitigation and response and remain the biggest obstacle to providing sufficient responses to GBV survivors. Because of negative cultural norms amongst refugee populations, GBV incidents remain underreported, which make the identification of cases and needs assessments difficult. UNHCR will continue to search for alternative ways to enhance GBV response, awareness and outreach activities.

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

1.3. Children are protected from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination and have access to child friendly procedures and inclusive national services

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Target (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure. | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 35.00% | 50.00% | 63.68% |

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Since 2015, thanks to a decree by Iran's Supreme Leader, all refugee and undocumented Afghan children have been able to access primary and secondary education within the national system. However, many children cannot fully benefit from this inclusive service, given the high costs of associate education costs and their families limited economic means. Instead of attending schools, many Afghan children are sent to work. The widespread prevalence of child labour within refugee and asylum seeker households, given the economic downturn, remains a serious concern.

Almost 40 per cent of refugees and asylum seekers who approached UNHCR in Iran are children. In 2022, UNHCR Iran bolstered child protection via the recruitment of senior child protection assistants deployed across all sub- and field- offices. These assistants were trained and sensitized on child protection, best interest procedures (BIP), birth registration, documentation and education to support more efficient and timely case management and referrals. By year end, the number of known children at heightened risk supported via BIPs increased to 63 per cent.

Various communication with communities tools were also employed to promote child protection and messaging disseminated via social media and UNHCR Iran's Help Page. UNHCR also continued to work closely with UNICEF on strengthening national systems.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

Given the large number of Afghan and Iraqi children in Iran, the variety of support required and the wide geographical spread of children – given that 99 per cent of refugees and asylum-seekers live in urban settings – identifying and responding to the increasing needs of children at risk remains difficult. UNHCR engaged and trained Afghan refugee focal points on child protection, to strengthen outreach and child protection interventions. Additionally, UNHCR will continue to explore opportunities to work with more partners in cooperation with the Government and other partners like UNICEF.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

3.1 By 2024, diverse refugees and asylum-seekers are better informed and are able to participate in a progressively more meaningful manner with UNHCR, the Government and partners in programme design, implementation and evaluation while also being able to access safe and effective feedback and response mechanisms

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Target (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 7.1 Proportion of PoC who participate meaningfully across all phases of the OMC. | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | Unknown | 30.00% | 2.00% |
| 7.2 Proportion of PoC who have access to effective feedback and response mechanisms. | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 25.00% | 25.00% | 21.00% |

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR Iran worked to enhance communication with communities, employing various tools to give the information about services available to them and to raise awareness among refugees on living in the host country. This included information dissemination on vaccination, heads-count exercise, via the operation's Help Page and other digital and mobile platforms, as well as through and targeted outreach activities by psychosocial counselors and UNHCR-Hired Lawyers. Training and guidance were provided across the UNHCR offices so that refugees and asylum seekers in need of assistance are thoroughly assessed and receive assistance in a coordinated manner

Over the year, 52,661 people who approached UNHCR were assessed for vulnerabilities and referred for various assistance and follow up such as psychosocial counseling. Priority was given to the most vulnerable refugees including women and children at risk. Trainings and workshops were held on topics including psychosocial support, mental health and anti-fraud and integrity measures, to improve internal capacity and strengthen UNHCR's engagement with refugees and asylum-seekers.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

Lack of adequate and efficient access to refugees, especially those in urban settings, and data remains a

key challenge to understanding and gathering information about the specific needs and vulnerabilities of refugees for programming and protection purposes. Enhancing community engagement and expanding refugee volunteers requires significant capacity building and investment.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

2.1. Services and assistance to support the most vulnerable people to cover their basic needs is extended and strengthened through an inclusive approach (where possible) with a particular focus on persons with specific needs

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR built and renovated 838 shelters in settlements across the country in 2022. In Niatak, where the establishment of a new settlement in response to the influx of large numbers of Afghans following events in Afghanistan in 2021 is ongoing, 136 transitional and 402 emergency shelters were completed as well as 241 latrines and showers and 16 latrines for people with disabilities. Several service infrastructures, including communal laundries and kitchens, as well as wastewater management networks, were built. In Torbat-e-Jam settlement 297 shelters were renovated, and water and natural gas heaters were installed, to adequately accommodate the most vulnerable new arrivals. 3,100 CRIs and hygiene kits were distributed to the most vulnerable families residing in settlements and urban areas. Other NFIs tailored for the people with specific needs were provided. UNHCR also built four Reception Halls in Dogharoun and Mahirud. In line with UNHCR's commitment to environmental sustainability, 4,200 solar street lights were procured for installation in 11 settlements. 119 pre-fabricated WASH facilities were delivered to nine settlements. UNHCR also completed two stagnant water collection projects in Bani Najjar settlement and one water well in Semnan settlement.

UNHCR scaled up its cash programme by 43 per cent to better address refugees' needs. Throughout the year, the operation continued to closely coordinate with key stakeholders and humanitarian actors through the Cash Working Group to promote the complementarity of assistance.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

The unfolding economic downturn in Iran is severely impacting the well-being of refugees, who can barely afford basic items and services. Overall, it is anticipated that economic instability will continue, and refugees will continue to have limited access to available job opportunities. This will further impact already vulnerable households, who will remain reliant on both humanitarian assistance and the continuation of inclusive policies extended by the Government of Iran for their daily survival.

Not only are needs of refugees increasing, so are the total number of refugees requiring support, particularly cash assistance. However, given budget limitations and high needs coupled with vast geographical areas where refugees reside, not all of the needs of refugees can be met. Additionally, the large volume of approaches and requests for assistance received from UNHCR's receptions is putting strain on UNHCR's ability to identify and process the most vulnerable.

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

2.3 Refugees and asylum-seekers maintain inclusive and affordable access to primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare over duration of multi-year plan

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

All Afghans, including new arrivals, and Iraqis (regardless of their documentation status) have access to free primary health services similar to nationals countrywide, including vaccination and immunization campaigns, ante- and post-natal care, growth monitoring for children under five, non-communicable disease care and treatment, and family planning. In 2022, UNHCR continued to support health inclusive policies through partnerships with BAFIA and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

In 2022, UNHCR contributed to the construction and rehabilitation of six health posts. UNHCR also supported 134 health posts in refugee-populated areas in urban settings and refugee settlements, including by procuring essential medicines and medical equipment. This will benefit both the refugee and host communities alike. On average, each facility provides services to some 1,296 individuals per month. UNHCR also technically and financially supported a government-led immunization campaign targeting close to 1,000,000 Afghans and Iraqis residing in 16 provinces.

UNHCR donated a large number of hygiene items (reusable masks, gloves, dignity kits, soap and hand sanitizer) to the Ministry of Health, Centre for Disease Control for distribution in the health centers for health personnel, as well as for refugees countrywide. Although secondary and tertiary health care assistance is available to all, the high costs of these services remain a barrier for most. To mitigate this, since 2015, UNHCR has supported the government-led initiative to provide registered refugees access to the national Universal Public Health Insurance, so they can access secondary and tertiary health at reduced rates. The Government of Iran provided free coverage to 52,000 refugees, while UNHCR covered the premium fee for 120,000 of the most vulnerable refugees.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

Following the events in Afghanistan in 2021, a considerable number of Afghan asylum seekers fled to Iran. As the health status of newly arriving Afghans have tended to be more precarious, this has added to the pressures felt by the already over-stretched medical system struggling to cope with the effects of the global pandemic and economic instability. More support is needed to strengthen the primary, secondary and tertiary public health systems, to enable the government to maintain their inclusive health policies.

While the national insurance programme is one of the most effective services provided to refugees that help alleviate their vulnerabilities, the cost of the premium fee, which increases on a yearly basis, continues to be the main barrier for refugees to access this service.

11. Outcome Area: Education

2.2 Refugees and asylum-seekers maintain an inclusive and equitable access to the primary and secondary education system in Iran over duration of multi-year plan

| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Target (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 11.2 Proportion of PoC enrolled in the national education system. [GCR 2.2.1] | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 80.00% | 82.00% | 82.00% |

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

For decades, Iran has maintained inclusive policies allowing refugees and other displaced persons access to education services within the national system, regardless of their documentation. UNHCR continued to support refugees' access to safe learning spaces by co-funding the construction of schools with the Ministry of Education to ease the pressure put on overcrowded classrooms in refugee-hosting areas. The construction of 32 schools in 16 provinces was completed in 2022, providing additional safe learning spaces

for around 23,040 refugee and host community children. UNHCR also supported with educational equipment for schools in five provinces and collaborated with the Literacy Movement Organization on the provision of non-formal education, targeting 6,985 out-of-school children and over-aged students. Students were also provided with educational kits (including books, notebooks, pencil, erasers, etc.). In addition, some 4,506 refugee and host community students received tablets. In close collaboration with BAFIA and a partner NGO, 612 male and female refugee university students were supported through the DAFI scholarship scheme.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

Although the Government of Iran promotes inclusive education policies, refugees and asylum-seekers continue to face challenges in accessing education. A shortage of schools and classrooms made it difficult to accommodate all refugee and undocumented school-aged children, leading to overcrowded classrooms in areas highly populated by refugees, while many newly arrived Afghan children have been unable to enroll. An increase in the number of children needing a space in school also led to a high teacher-student ratio (1:50) which has also impacted the overall quality of education for Iranian students who are studying side-by-side with Afghan students. This situation could create social tensions between the host community and refugees, as parents may perceive a negative correlation between their children's school performance declining and the increased number of Afghan students.

Given the severe economic downturn impacting the country, the government is finding it more and more difficult to maintain their level of investment in education support for refugees. Reportedly, the cost of construction materials increased by 46 per cent last year, therefore increasing the cost of constructing additional schools.

UNHCR also continued to advocate with the Government of Iran on the situation for refugee university students, who face protection risks when they have to forfeit their Amayesh status to receive student visas.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

3.2 By 2024, an increased number of refugees and asylum-seekers enjoy expanded and diversified livelihood opportunities

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2022, UNHCR implemented livelihood interventions (vocational training and income generation) through direct implementation and partnerships with government and non-government partners targeting 1,901 refugees. Through vocational training 1,764 beneficiaries were reached and 101 refugees generated employment at workshops through partnerships, and 38 refugees were targeted through direct implementation. UNHCR also supported by procuring various equipment for training courses for some 50 technical and vocational training centers in 13 provinces.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

High inflation rates continued to severely impact households who usually rely on precarious and unstable jobs for their income. In this context, the implementation of livelihood interventions and increased access of refugees to income generating opportunities became more critical. Out of 9,000 refugees identified with the partners as in need of livelihood assistance, UNHCR was only able to support 1,903 beneficiaries who were considered most vulnerable.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

4.1 Potential for voluntary return realized

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Since 2002, UNHCR has supported the voluntary repatriation of nearly 1 million refugees from Iran. In 2022 UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 376 returnees to Afghanistan and two returnees to Iraq – a substantial decrease (57 per cent) compared to the 875 returns facilitated in the same period in 2021, which can be attributed to the instability and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

In view of the unpredictable situation in Afghanistan, only a small number of Afghan refugees in Iran have shown willingness to return to their home country. In 2022, UNHCR continued to support those who opted to return by ensuring such returns are informed, voluntary, safe, and dignified. Moreover, the repatriation of Afghan university students who have to return to Afghanistan to forfeit their Amayesh cards and obtain a national passport with which to obtain an Iranian student visa significantly declined from 57 per cent to 17 per cent of the number of returnees in 2022.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

4.2 Increased number of people in need of resettlement identified, and submitted for resettlement

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| Indicators | Population Type | Baseline (2022) | Target (2022) | Actual (2022) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement. | Refugees and Asylum-seekers | 56 | 3,000 | 3,126 |

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

There was renewed interest from resettlement states to resettle Afghan refugees from Iran following the events in Afghanistan in August 2021. A resettlement upscaling exercise was rolled out in Iran in April 2022 to meet the submission target of 3,000 refugees, led by UNHCR with support from the Government of Iran, resettlement countries and, in cooperation with IOM.

In 2022, 3,126 refugees were submitted for resettlement consideration, including 3,092 Afghans and 34 Rohingyas. Only the most vulnerable refugees falling under UNHCR's resettlement submission categories were submitted. A large majority (73 per cent) were female headed households and almost half (46 per cent) were children under the age of 18. To support this, UNHCR recruited experts to conduct case

identification, refugee status determination, resettlement case processing and post-submission.

To supplement resettlement, complementary pathways, such as family reunification, labour and education mobility programmes, and humanitarian admission programmes, were also explored in 2022. 292 individuals received information and counselling on family reunification procedures, while 40 individuals were provided with information on labour and education mobility programmes, or humanitarian admission programmes.

Challenges to Achieving Outcome

Further advocacy with the Government of Iran is required to ensure most vulnerable displaced people, regardless of documentation, benefit from resettlement. Other challenges include lengthy and cumbersome exit procedures and overstay fines which can sometimes delay refugees' departure.

To access complementary pathways, refugees face considerable challenges. These range from a lack of document, complex application procedures, language barriers, shortage of human resources, and difficulties in obtaining exit permits and securing the funds needed to cover overstay fines.

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

UNHCR Iran developed a Disability Inclusion Workplan. Various activities were implemented in 2022, including the provision of cash for people with disabilities, improving physical access to the reception centre and country office, and construction and rehabilitation of 20 schools and 3 health posts.

Due to the more severe vulnerabilities of refugee women, especially of female headed households, and their limited access to employment, targeted livelihoods and training interventions for vulnerable women continued. UNHCR also launched various awareness sessions on the importance of education as a way to reduce the high school dropout rates.

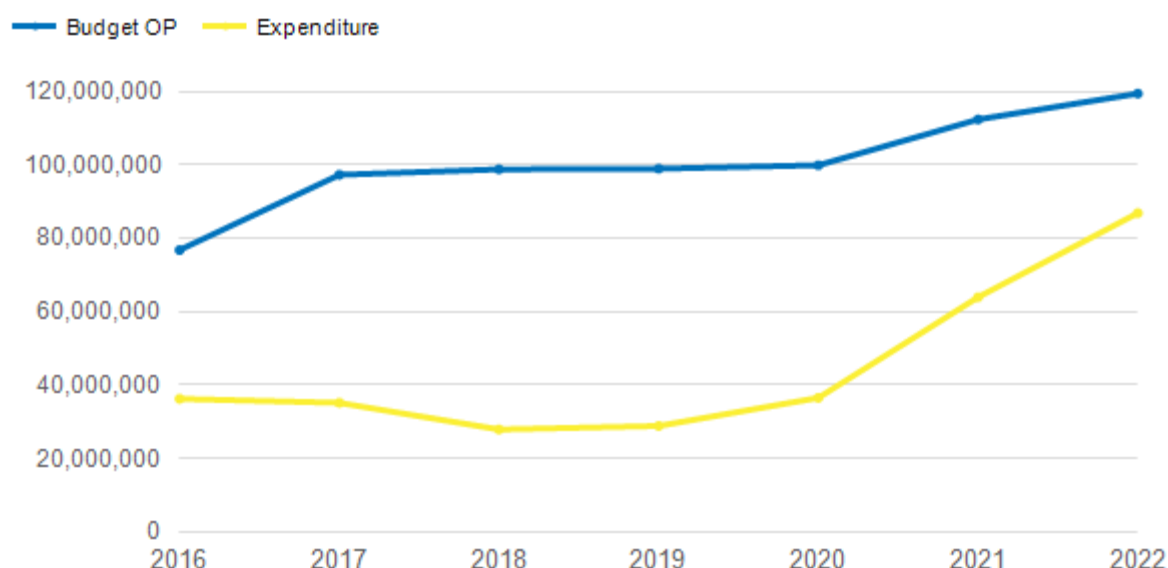
Section 3: Resources

3.1 Financial Data

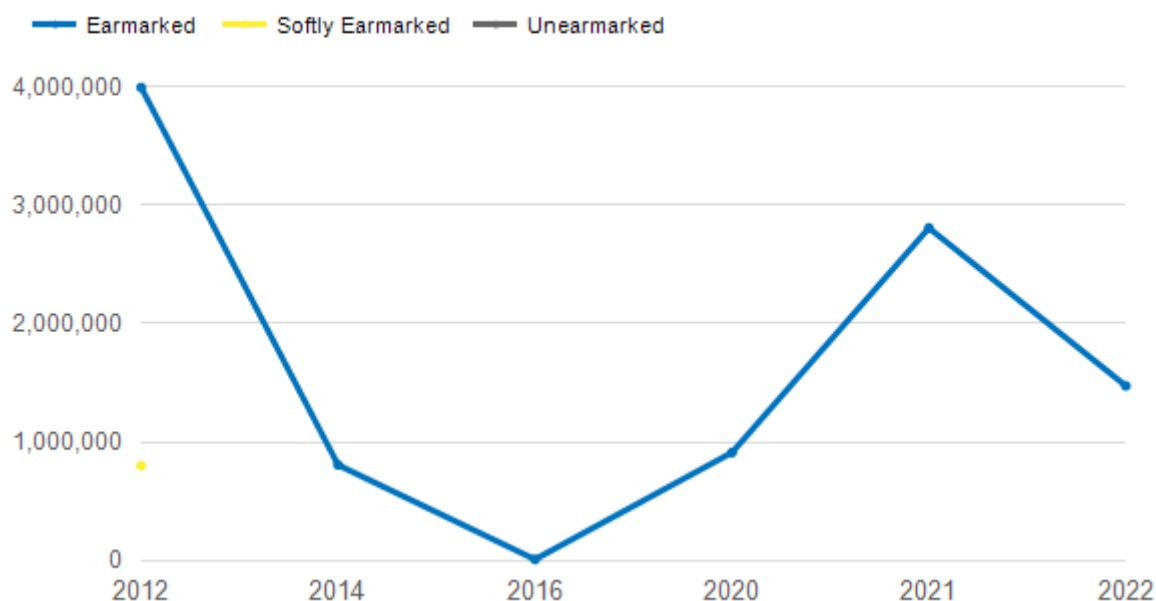
| Impact Area | Final Budget | Funds Available | Funds Available as % of Budget | Expenditure | Expenditure as % of Funds Available |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| IA1: Protect | 11,373,469 | 3,481,056 | 30.61% | 2,255,875 | 64.80% |
| IA2: Respond | 88,208,186 | 73,909,243 | 83.79% | 73,999,743 | 100.12% |
| IA3: Empower | 6,979,440 | 1,690,558 | 24.22% | 1,690,558 | 100.00% |
| IA4: Solve | 12,833,171 | 8,883,874 | 69.23% | 8,883,874 | 100.00% |
| All Impact Areas | | 90,461 | 0.00% | | 0.00% |
| Total | 119,394,266 | 88,055,193 | 73.75% | 86,830,050 | 98.61% |

| Outcome Area | Final Budget | Funds Available | Funds Available as % of Budget | Expenditure | Expenditure as % of Funds Available |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| OA3: Policy/Law | 4,820,991 | 1,992,929 | 41.34% | 767,748 | 38.52% |
| OA4: GBV | 1,920,991 | 547,086 | 28.48% | 547,086 | 100.00% |
| OA5: Children | 1,310,496 | 234,997 | 17.93% | 234,997 | 100.00% |
| OA7: Community | 2,251,013 | 549,395 | 24.41% | 549,395 | 100.00% |
| OA8: Well-being | 27,434,742 | 24,327,578 | 88.67% | 24,418,078 | 100.37% |
| OA10: Health | 37,491,999 | 33,191,059 | 88.53% | 33,191,059 | 100.00% |
| OA11: Education | 17,463,424 | 14,010,574 | 80.23% | 14,010,574 | 100.00% |
| OA13 Livelihood | 4,728,427 | 1,141,163 | 24.13% | 1,141,163 | 100.00% |
| OA14: Return | 1,455,382 | 402,571 | 27.66% | 402,571 | 100.00% |
| OA15: Resettle | 11,377,789 | 8,481,303 | 74.54% | 8,481,303 | 100.00% |
| EA18: Support | 5,818,022 | 2,380,032 | 40.91% | 2,380,032 | 100.00% |
| EA20: External | 3,320,991 | 706,044 | 21.26% | 706,044 | 100.00% |
| All Outcome Areas | | 90,461 | 0.00% | | 0.00% |
| Total | 119,394,266 | 88,055,193 | 73.75% | 86,830,050 | 98.61% |

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

UNHCR in Iran maintains a solid field presence through three sub-offices, one field office and the Representative Office in Tehran. The country is divided into four areas of responsibility and UNHCR’s activities in each area are implemented by its respective field offices or sub offices, while the office of the representative in Tehran provides overall guidance and oversight on protection and programming issues. UNHCR has scaled up its operation in 2022, including for resettlement, with dedicated teams of expert staff supporting multi-sectorial activities.

UNHCR continues to work in partnership with the Government of Iran to implement programmes for refugees, in collaboration with line ministries, national and international NGOs, and UN sister agencies. The Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) under the Ministry of Interior is UNHCR’s main government counterpart for all refugee-related matters. UNHCR’s field presence and close engagement with the partners, including BAFIA who leads the protection and assistance of

refugee and asylum seekers in the country, has enabled UNHCR to identify and priority needs, and efficiently allocate available resources to address most critical needs, while advocating for addressing remaining gaps.

In response to the increase in the need and vulnerabilities of refugees, and the additional strain felt by the government due to the economic downturn, UNHCR put in place a more robust resource mobilization efforts and to manage engagement and advocacy with donors. Funding received enabled UNHCR to meaningfully support the government's inclusive policies and, to advocate for the expansion of protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers in Iran.



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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