

Annual Results Report

2023

Pakistan

Acknowledgements

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Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

For four decades, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been one of the world's largest refugee hosting countries. In 2023, it hosted approximately 3 million Afghans of various legal statuses, including arrivals since August 2021. However, the growing socioeconomic crisis in Pakistan – exacerbated by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented floods, historically high inflation, political instability and insecurity – has challenged the country's long-standing tradition of hospitality. The situation in Pakistan shifted following the 3 October announcement of a plan to repatriate more than 1 million undocumented foreigners without valid documents by 1 November 2023. The "Illegal foreigners' repatriation plan (IFRP)" saw close to 500,000 Afghans return to Afghanistan between 15 September and the end of 2023, including some 30,000 deportees. More than 30,000 people were arrested and detained. Against this dynamic backdrop, UNHCR scaled-up its response to Afghans' most urgent protection needs and advocated a screening mechanism to identify those in need of international protection to ensure their legal stay in Pakistan and protection against forced return. While return numbers began to decline by year-end, the IFRP's impact was far reaching, requiring robust and joined-up advocacy with the Government of Pakistan and a comprehensive refugee management policy.

With data from the 2023 nation-wide census still to be released, there was no change in estimated stateless population figures.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

Refugees and asylum-seekers can realize their rights in line with international protection standards

Stateless populations can realize their rights in line with international protection standards

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	93.24%	83.85%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	95.70%

Despite being one of the largest refugee-hosting countries, Pakistan is still not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol nor has it enacted national asylum legislation. The administrative management of Afghan refugees through the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions and the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees added to the uncertainty over refugee management. Despite the absence of a Government mechanism to register new arrivals, UNHCR continued to receive new applicants in 2023 but was unable to issue documentation to asylum-seekers since the 2022 Ministry of Foreign Affairs instruction to cease registration and assistance to Afghans seeking asylum. Nevertheless, UNHCR continued its advocacy with key Government interlocutors, emphasizing the critical importance of a Government-led mechanism that ensures international protection for those in need. With no tangible progress made in 2023, the lack of documentation heightened refugees' risk of arrest, detention and refoulement and amplified their fears and anxieties, particularly following the implementation of the IFRP. Although UNHCR continued to call against the forced return of Afghans – in line with the February 2023 Update to the “Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People fleeing Afghanistan Update” – Pakistan deported some 29,320 Afghans (largely undocumented although some were registered either by the Government or UNHCR. UNHCR estimated that 1,550 people were refouled in 2023, including 706 Proof of Registration (POR) card holders and 844 UNHCR-registered individuals, largely because of the IFRP.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

Refugees (of all age, gender, and diversity groups) can exercise their freedoms and rights and make use of access to public services leading to greater levels of gender equality and self-reliance.

Women and child refugees and asylum seekers are safe from violence, exploitation, harmful practices and other forms of rights violations

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17.18%	20.02%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3.60%	4.17%

In 2023, legal barriers to the right to work remained in place and adverse economic conditions created hurdles for refugees seeking employment. With half of Pakistan's refugees estimated to be living below the poverty line, data indicated that close to a quarter engage in daily wage labour and around two-thirds lacked quality education, livelihoods and economic inclusion. The Office implemented a multi-faceted livelihoods programme focused on skills development, internships, financial literacy and start-up grants, reaching 8,658 people and their families. Through the MADE-51 programme, UNHCR supported the inclusion of products made by 730 women artisans into the supply chain of five social enterprises. Three UNHCR-commissioned studies examined previous skills development and poverty graduation programmes supported by UNHCR to inform future livelihoods programming. Preliminary results showed that just over half (54%) – mostly women – graduated out of poverty although only 46% of former skills development trainees were able to find employment, highlighting the difficulties refugees face entering the skilled labour market.

UNHCR supported 142 refugee village schools in 2023, reaching 56,331 (40% female) primary- and secondary-aged students who would have otherwise faced challenges accessing education. In these schools, the overall enrolment rate increased by 2.7% and girl enrolment by 1%. Secondary education access improved, particularly for girls, thanks to the Accelerated Learning Programme which provided a vital pathway for girls to return to formal education and obtain middle grade certificates. To further improve girls' enrolment rate, UNHCR provided cash assistance to cover transportation costs to the families of adolescent girls to encourage attendance in nearby Government schools.

Moreover, as part of concerted efforts to improve tertiary enrolment, UNHCR awarded 60% of new university scholarships to refugee women – 11% more than in 2022.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

Options for solutions for refugees in Pakistan will be expanded to include resettlement and complementary pathways alongside voluntary repatriation

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	435	36,337
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	16	346
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	106
4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0

In 2023, 36,337 registered refugees participated in UNHCR's voluntary repatriation programme – a significant increase compared to 2022, when 6,040 registered refugees returned. The upward trend was driven initially by socioeconomic challenges and soaring inflation in Pakistan before the introduction of the first phase of the IFRP targeting undocumented Afghans which saw 25,214 Government-registered refugees return to Afghanistan from mid-September through the facilitated voluntary repatriation process. This was primarily prompted by the mobilization of law enforcement in the context of the IFRP with Afghans reporting increased harassment, extortion, arrest and detention. 45% of people stated that the socioeconomic challenges and inflation was the main reason for return while 25% said fear of harassment and arrest.

In 2023, resettlement and complementary pathways programmes were upscaled. 963 cases (4,198 refugees) were submitted to 10 resettlement countries with 590 refugees departing to eight countries. A further 106 people departed to eight countries through complementary pathways. However, departures were hampered following the introduction of exit fines in mid-2023 for foreigners who overstayed their visas or entered and stayed in Pakistan in an irregular manner, including people supported by UNHCR's resettlement and complementary pathways. Advocacy to reinstate a "free of charge" exit permit mechanism

continues.

In addition, 138 stateless people's identity documentation – previously blocked by the National Database and Registration Authority – was either cleared, unblocked or renewed. This is expected to open avenues for affected households to acquire identity documentation for every family member, ensuring their access to basic services such as education, livelihoods and healthcare.

Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Indicator	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
Pakistan	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	82.00%

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

The prevailing human rights situation in Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls, coupled with the domestic security, political and economic situation in Pakistan, were among the main challenges in 2023. UNHCR re-oriented its response following the roll-out of the IFRP amid heightened tensions between refugee and host communities, significant devaluation of Pakistan's national currency as well as rising inflation.

With Afghans' access to territory mainly seen through a security and political lens, Afghan asylum-seekers were not granted legal status and this impacted UNHCR's long-term efforts to advance the creation of an asylum framework. Rising insecurity in the two main refugee hosting provinces – Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – also affected UNHCR's access to refugees and strained peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities as evidenced in the increase of anti-Afghan sentiments. Moreover, UNHCR's efforts to promote gender equality through education, livelihoods and community participation were hindered in part by heightened economic challenges and entrenched social norms. Efforts to improve the protection environment remained largely dependent on political and security factors. Establishing a screening mechanism to identify those in need of international protection and ensuring the stability of the resettlement programme will continue to be key strategic objectives for the Office in its advocacy with the newly established Government in 2024.

While World Bank funding brought new opportunities in 2023, the Government remained skeptical of the sustainability of donor support and international burden sharing, particularly with regards to recognizing new Afghan asylum-seekers and advancing solutions for the protracted refugee population.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

UNHCR expanded its partnership network in 2023, with 56 partners contributing to the Regional Refugee Plan (RRP), including nine UN agencies, 17 international NGOs, and 30 national NGOs. The RRP remained a valued planning and resource mobilization tool for key donors and partners but was only 32% funded by year-end. Coordination continued through an adapted Refugee Coordination Model that utilized existing humanitarian coordination structures, where refugee Protection Working Group and Pakistan refugee consultative forums convene at the federal and provincial levels and where refugee matters are mainstreamed into the work of thematic sectors. In addition, the support platform of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and its Core Group at the country level continued to provide means for members' active engagement in terms of resource mobilization and joint advocacy, especially in relation to

the IFRP.

UNHCR continued to cultivate partnerships with development actors to support refugee hosting areas. Along with three provincial projects funded through a refugee sub-window of the World Bank's IDA18 package, the "strengthening institutional refugee administration" federal project gained momentum and forged closer coordination between development and humanitarian partners while also looking into significantly improving refugee management. Moreover, development partners increased funding to hosting areas and included refugees in their strategies and programmes, namely the European Union, Netherlands, Japan, and Korea. UNHCR also continued to cultivate new partnerships with the Asian Development Bank, the International Finance Cooperation and Denmark.

Close collaboration and joint advocacy efforts were made with partners, particularly with IOM in relation to the IFRP. Cooperation also grew between UN agencies as seen in the inclusion of refugees in the 2023-2027 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. UNCT Pakistan also developed a common pledge on refugee inclusion.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Refugees in Pakistan have access to registration and identity documentation

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	92.82%	100.00%	76.93%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	57.29%	100.00%	15.67%
1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.20%	100.00%	68.19%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In collaboration with the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and the National Database and Registration Authority, UNHCR concluded the Document Renewal and Verification Exercise (DRIVE) following the last extension to cover Afghan refugees who did not participate in the 2022 verification exercise. 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees were verified and issued with new smart POR cards. The smart card contains biometric data and is technologically compatible with systems used in Pakistan to authenticate nationals' identities. The card's validity expired on 30 June 2023 and was subsequently extended to 31 December 2023 and later to 31 March 2024.

In 2023, 11 POR card modification centres operated by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) with UNHCR support provided registered refugees access to essential services to manage, modify, apply and re-issue their cards as well as to record and document important events such as births and deaths.

In collaboration with the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees and NADRA, standard operating procedures were updated to strengthen centres' procedural safeguards. In 2023, 155,542 POR card holders accessed these centres' services, including 33,405 people who renewed their cards. 47,921 new births were registered and 35,146 people were validated as unregistered members of registered family and issued with family certificates. Following the resumption of birth certificate issuance in late 2022, some 31,816 birth certificates were distributed in 2023 following a multi-pronged information campaign. UNHCR was approached by 122,428 Afghans in 2023, bringing the total number of pre-screened people to 476,275. This included 369,530 who arrived following the events of August 2021 in Afghanistan. UNHCR did not issue asylum-seeker certificates or refugee identity cards to people who requested them after January 2022. This left people vulnerable to harassment and exploitation and restricted their access to basic needs and services. The implementation of the IFRP also put Afghans at heightened risk of arrest and deportation.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

Refugees have access to asylum procedures which uphold procedural standards

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	322.00	270.00	368.00

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Mandate refugee status determination (RSD) is used strategically as a protection tool in Pakistan to secure resettlement for the most vulnerable refugees, and for complementary pathways programmes as needed.

In 2023, 4,298 individuals underwent RSD assessment resulting in the submission of 4,198 refugees for resettlement. 590 refugees departed on resettlement and 106 UNHCR registered individuals departed via complementary pathways programs.

Given limited numbers of resettlement and complementary pathway places and as RSD is only done in this context, refugees are not necessarily prioritised for RSD after registration, hence resulting in longer processing times.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

Refugees' rights are strengthened under the national legal/policy framework

Stateless persons have access to civil registration systems to improve prospects for acquiring nationality and ensuring their rights are realized

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Pakistan is yet to enact national refugee law under its Comprehensive Policy on the Management of Afghan Refugees, 2017. In March 2023, a draft Refugee Bill introduced as a Private Member's Bill in the national Parliament is still with the relevant standing committee but has not progressed. In order to continue to engage key stakeholders, capacity building sessions were conducted with law enforcement, judges, public prosecutors, civil society and other key stakeholders to strengthen understanding on refugee protection principles and refugee rights. UNHCR and IOM coordinated to harmonize capacity building activities for police in areas where both are implementing such activities.

UNHCR continued its strategic cooperation with Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) to teach an international refugee law course and organized a conference with academic institutions from across Pakistan advocating for the introduction of international refugee law into their curriculum. Collaboration continued with various institutions across Pakistan, driving further engagement with academics and students on key refugee issues. UNHCR also participated in training sessions of Pakistani peacekeepers, organized by the Centre for International Peace and Stability, speaking to armed forces personnel on UNHCR's mandate and protection of refugees.

Activities targeting stateless persons were expanded in 2023 to new settlement areas, increasing outreach for awareness raising and legal assistance for the stateless population. The continuous engagement with the community as well as relevant authorities has resulted in increased rates of birth registration, particularly for children who may have only one documented parent. The legal advice and assistance related primarily to acquiring identity documentation through follow-up with relevant governmental authorities. As a result of these interventions, 138 individuals received their identity documents, a de-facto proof of Pakistani nationality consequently clearing the way for acquisition of identity documentation for the entire families - an example of amplified impact. The overall legal assistance included individual case management including follow-ups, individual counselling, community outreach and awareness sessions.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

GBV risks are reduced and all survivors have adequate and timely access to quality services to effectively address root causes of GBV

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	50.00%	73.33%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR advocated for the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in existing national services – in coordination with the UN Population Fund as the gender-based violence sub-sector lead – and supported authorities' efforts to address practical barriers affecting refugees' access to gender-based violence services.

UNHCR trained various stakeholders (including medical officers) on gender-based violence safe disclosure and referrals and existing referral pathways. UNHCR implemented gender-based violence programming in refugee villages and urban areas through four partners on response, risk mitigation and prevention to ensure women and other marginalized refugees and asylum-seekers were safe from violence, exploitation, harmful practices and other rights violations. UNHCR aimed to also ensure vulnerable refugees could access quality and effective services such as health, mental health and psychosocial support as well as social care and legal and security support, in line with minimum gender-based violence standards. Outreach focused on sensitizing the community on referral pathways and, in parallel, facilitating adequate coordination among service providers. Gender-based violence prevention interventions conducted in 2023 included awareness raising for the refugee community, which provided information on core concepts, gender bias, violence against women and girls, and how to be an ally. UNHCR and partners established 22 women and girls' safe spaces countrywide. These spaces empower and promote the meaningful participation of women and girls in society through different activities and information sessions, including on mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), livelihoods, sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence.

In 2023, UNHCR began implementing the Engaging Men in Accountable Practice methodology, which aims to achieve transformative behaviour changes and address the root causes of gender-based violence. In these sessions, men and women from across the country learned about gender bias/norms, violence against women and girls, how to support gender-based violence survivors as well as how to stop or reduce the violence. Participants generally provided positive feedback, with many men reflecting their positive behaviour changes through their support to women household members. In parallel, an evidence-based approach was mainstreamed through gender-based violence safety audits, which helped to understand the needs and risks communities face, particularly women, girls, and people with diverse profiles. UNHCR prioritized raising awareness of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, ensuring reporting mechanisms were in place and strengthening assistance for survivors. UNHCR also worked to bolster coordination with sector leads and ensure risk mitigation and prevention could be integrated into all sectors, including via workshops to build UNHCR and partners' staff capacity.

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

Children are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination (in reference to baseline data) and have access to child friendly procedures and services

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	24.99%	35.00%	33.76%
5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	2.00%	1.81%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	95.00%	97.11%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR and partners scaled up the best interests determination procedure and case management support to ensure every child identified with a specific protection risk, including those who were separated or unaccompanied, received specialized child protection services. Targeted protection and multisectoral services such as alternative care, psychological and social support, legal and cash assistance, family tracing and reunification, and durable solutions in their best interests were among the available services. These services sought to address the longer-term impacts of children who experienced violence, abuse, neglect or separation and reduced the likelihood that a child would be harmed again.

In 2023, child and caregiver feedback surveys sought to assess the quality of case management and protection services provided to at-risk children. Of those who benefitted from child protection services, 92% reported being satisfied with the services. To enhance community engagement to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation, UNHCR via partners supported child-led and community-led initiatives, contributing to the overall protection and psychological and social well-being of children and families. To promote effective child participation in child protection programming, children's clubs, child-friendly spaces and mobile child-friendly activities were also supported. Community members received capacity building on child protection, child rights, safe identification and referral mechanisms. Community-level action and community outreach on the care and protection of children was particularly significant during the implementation of the IFRP when children were adversely affected by the increasing risk of family separation, detention of caregivers, trafficking and refoulement. Community members also benefited from child protection sessions which enhanced their awareness of child protection, rights, and available services. This helped strengthen prevention efforts and community responses to child protection issues.

In 2023, UNHCR and UNICEF agreed on a joint plan of action to advocate for the inclusion of refugee children into national child protection systems and policies and to enhance the capacity of these systems and services. Both worked to strengthen national and provincial child protection systems to address the specific needs and rights of displaced children in Pakistan. Coordination with national and provincial child protection authorities also led to greater engagement by child protection actors during the implementation of the Government-led IFRP by establishing referral pathways between authorities. Capacity-building sessions were carried out to improve child protection case management and referral pathways in key locations. Following sustained advocacy by UNHCR, birth registration services for Afghan refugee children were successfully reinstated, resulting in 31,816 birth certificates being issued.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

Protection interventions are implemented to ensure the prevention of refoulement and access to justice is ensured for refugees and asylum-seekers

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, the general protection environment remained fragile. The IFRP roll out saw a 222% increase in refugees and asylum-seekers being arrested, detained and deported compared to 2022. Holding and transit centres were established across the country and the Government implemented an expedited deportation process.

Initially, POR card holders, Afghan citizen card holders as well as UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum-seekers were impacted alongside those who were undocumented. However, joint advocacy by UNHCR and the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, as well as its provincial chapters coupled with support from donors and the SSAR Core Group, meant the arrest and detention situation of those card holders stabilized. Legal assistance partners were generally able to secure the release of POR card holders. UNHCR and partners continued to monitor arrests, detention and the situation at the borders. In this regard, UNHCR and IOM worked together to enhance protection monitoring, response and advocacy capacity.

In 2023, UNHCR scaled up the capacity of its nine advice and legal aid centres and increased the number of lawyers and paralegals to respond to the growing needs of the communities, particularly during the implementation of the IFRP. Legal assistance partners supported more than 77,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the police stations and holding sites as well as in and out of court interventions. Legal camps and community meetings were held with the communities, which served as a critical protection monitoring tool and raised awareness among refugees of their rights and legal protection. Staff at UNHCR's advice and legal aid centres provided in person individual legal counselling and through its helplines. Counselling assistance provided was mostly related to the fragile protection environment, harassment, POR card renewals and modifications, asylum procedures, rental agreements, and affidavits. 2023 also saw a significant case law development through a judgement by the Islamabad High Court on a UNHCR-supported case which recognized the right to seek asylum and concluded that a person seeking asylum could not be penalized for illegal entry.

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

People with and for whom UNHCR works (of all age, gender and diversity groups) have enhanced participation in programme design, implementation and evaluation thereby ensuring the full engagement of women, children and vulnerable groups at the decision making level

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	46.00%	37.08%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR remained committed to fostering meaningful engagement with refugee communities in Pakistan through its outreach volunteer programme. The programme was crucial in promoting the participation of women and girls, providing essential information to communities on UNHCR and partner services, identifying and referring vulnerable cases to services such as cash assistance, education and health, and proposing community-led initiatives. 1,591 outreach volunteers were trained on key protection concepts across the country. Encouragingly, 37% were women. UNHCR and partners actively identified and promoted 36 community-led initiatives such as home-based stitching centres, sports and performing arts projects, and community libraries. These initiatives supported the social and economic needs of each community, promoting social cohesion, long-term self-reliance and empowerment.

To ensure accountability to affected populations, UNHCR and partners operated several community-based complaint and feedback mechanisms such as helplines, complaint boxes, a dedicated mailbox, community consultation sessions and protection counselling. Compared to 2022, there was a 125% increase in the number of people able to access effective feedback and response through these mechanisms. This was in some part due to a significant improvement in the operational capacity of the helpline, recruitment of 15 additional operators, interest in the multi-purpose cash assistance programme, and greater demand for information and assistance following the implementation of the IFRP.

UNHCR and partners also supported 1,286 people with disabilities and provided them with assistive devices and referrals to protection services such as gender-based violence and child protection case management, legal assistance and cash assistance. To advance the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities, 170 frontline humanitarian workers, including those with disabilities and diverse profiles were trained on humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities in Islamabad, Quetta, and Karachi.

To ensure the meaningful participation of displaced and stateless communities in needs identification and prioritization for 2024, a countrywide participatory needs assessment was conducted in nine locations across Pakistan. Refugees' recommendations to UNHCR included advocating with national authorities for access to documentation, improving access to essential rights and services such as livelihoods, education, and health services, improving UNHCR's and partners' accessibility (particularly for women, children, and people with disabilities), sensitizing law enforcement authorities on human rights and refugee protection, and enhancing mental health awareness and community-based support systems. This feedback will continue to inform UNHCR's planning and programming in 2024 and beyond.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

People with whom UNHCR works receive cash transfers and/or in-kind assistance.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	100.00%	84.89%
8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	26.00%	30.32%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Following the large-scale cash distribution programme by the Government of Pakistan for impoverished, flood-affected Pakistanis, UNHCR launched multi-purpose cash assistance for refugees to address the impact of the floods. This intervention – which concluded in mid-2023 – was the first of its kind and scale and sought to address the immediate and basic needs of 1.3 million registered refugees and asylum-seekers (320,000 households).

UNHCR also took a more targeted approach in line with the available resources through a cash assistance programme for people with special needs. The cash assistance specifically targeted various vulnerable groups, including children at risk, people with disabilities, older people facing challenges, survivors of gender-based violence, people with serious medical conditions, and women at risk. By tailoring the assistance to the specific needs of these groups, UNHCR provided crucial support to the most vulnerable members, reaching 115,780 refugees. Targeted cash support was also provided to enable vulnerable refugees, particularly girls, attending accelerated learning programmes to continue their education.

Through a partnership with Pakistan's National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, UNHCR

supported 952 trainees via a six-month livelihoods programme, providing PKR 6,000 per month for each participant. However, certain training activities were affected by the IFRP roll out, with several trainees facing challenges attending classes or deciding to return to Afghanistan.

Recognizing the critical needs of the affected population, existing modalities and corresponding standard operating procedures were simplified to ensure larger cash disbursements could be made while ensuring adequate risk-mitigation mechanisms were in place. This strategic move aimed to address the basic needs of affected refugees, providing them with financial assistance during periods of heightened uncertainty.

9. Outcome Area: Sustainable Housing and Settlements

Proportion of refugees who have sustainable and affordable access to energy and adequate water systems and sanitation

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	26.00%	30.32%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR stepped up efforts to enhance clean energy access in Pakistan at the household and communal level for refugees and host communities. Comprehensive energy assessments for 209 community and public facilities led to the solarization of 123 facilities in the education, health, livelihoods and protection sectors. While 26,871 solar kits and equipment for community facilities were already procured to mitigate the risk related to national currency fluctuations, longer lead times has meant the solarization of 121 facilities and distribution of kits will take place in 2024.

To mitigate protection risks within refugee villages, solar streetlights were installed in communal areas and the main access roads in 25 refugee villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (20) and Balochistan (5). Energy appliances, including cooking stoves and solar lanterns, were distributed to 7,070 refugee households in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 3,353 host community households in Balochistan to address their immediate energy needs. Portable solar kits were also distributed to 227 refugee-owned home-based businesses as were 35 refugee housing units which now serve as communal spaces.

To encourage ownership and sustainability, certified vocational training sessions on their maintenance were organized for 604 men and women – 60% of whom were refugees and 40% host community members across Balochistan, Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Awareness sessions on energy, gender mainstreaming, and the environment reached 10,811 people in educational institutions and communities. These efforts were complemented by the planting of 74,300 new trees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan aimed at fostering peaceful co-existence and addressing the environmental impact of hosting refugees.

To improve access to clean and safe water, UNHCR prioritized the maintenance, repair and upgrade of water supply networks in refugee villages. In addition, 35 solarized water schemes and three open wells were completed in 28 villages across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to address water scarcity challenges, while 245 rain harvesting systems were installed in eight refugee villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote water conservation.

UNHCR renovated 20 schools in 11 refugee-hosting villages to improve children's learning environment. Streets and drainage systems in five refugee villages were upgraded to enhance community health and 73 refugee housing units were constructed to create safe spaces for women, temporary learning areas and health facilities. To improve the quality of daily life and maintain people's dignity, 1,058 shelter kits, 151 family tents, 74 core relief kits containing items such as bedding and kitchen sets were distributed among refugees residing in seven villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 21,811 long-lasting insecticidal nets and 46,528 dignity kits were also distributed. To complement these efforts, 870 awareness sessions on personal hygiene were conducted across all refugee villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

People with and for whom UNHCR works have access to health care facilities and services leading to improvements in their health status

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	83.00%	83.96%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	68.00%	85.00%	95.98%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees are encouraged to receive health services from Government hospitals and health facilities. In 2023, UNHCR strategically invested resources to enhance the capacity of public health facilities to support the delivery of quality services to refugee and host communities.

In Balochistan, the Office delivered medical equipment to seven tertiary health facilities, improving capacity and quality in trauma, gynecological and neonatal care in hospitals with a yearly turnover of more than 1.6 million patients. Similarly, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 10 main tertiary and district hospitals in refugee-hosting districts were upgraded with equipment. A complete neonatal intensive care unit was installed in the Medical Teaching Institute in Dera Ismail Khan district and various diagnostic and surgical equipment was provided to seven medical facilities in Peshawar.

UNHCR completed the solarization of 14 health facilities in 2023. This has not only provided uninterrupted, clean electricity access to the hospitals but also reduced the financial burden these facilities face.

To reduce the morbidity, mortality and transmission of tuberculosis in refugee hosting areas, UNHCR conducted 612 awareness sessions in the refugee villages of Chaghi and Killa Saifullah districts, reaching 8,827 people (4,419 women and 4,408 men). Community health workers referred 425 presumptive cases to screening centres, where 19 people were found positive and registered for treatment. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNHCR partner International Medical Corps referred 511 presumptive cases (269 males and 242 females), 41 of whom were positive, including 26 women and 15 men.

MHPSS was identified as a critical need in community consultations, particularly during the IFRP roll out. In response, UNHCR introduced a minimum service package to meet the most critical needs of emergency-affected populations through training sessions for managers and practitioners of MHPSS, which were attended by multiple stakeholders including government, UN and other NGO and community-based organizations in Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar.

11. Outcome Area: Education

People with and for whom UNHCR works have access to education facilities – primary, secondary, and tertiary – leading to higher education status among the persons we serve

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14.17%	15.00%	14.43%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR continued supporting access to education for refugee and host community children in Pakistan. 130,064 pupils were enrolled in school, including 56,331 refugee children in 142 UNHCR-supported refugee village schools (99 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 35 in Balochistan and eight in Punjab) and 73,733 in national schools.

The number of children enrolled in primary education at refugee village schools was slightly higher than in 2022 – up 2.7% overall, with girls' attendance also rising by 1%. Most children attending school were enrolled at primary level (50,750 of the 56,331 children) and 40% were girls. Of the 5,581 pupils enrolled in secondary level education at the refugee village schools, 57.5% were boys. To mitigate economic barriers and encourage more young women to go to secondary school, girls were provided with cash for transport. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1,083 young refugee women above school age enrolled in accelerated learning programme centres. To date, 618 students graduated from grade 8.

In 2023, all 142 refugee village schools successfully transitioned to the national curriculum. UNHCR worked with the Pakistan Institute of Education and the national Education Management Information System (EMIS) Office to include refugee enrolment-related indicators in the data standardization framework. This was being piloted at provincial level in 2023 and successfully synchronized with the EMIS in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Under the refugee-affected and hosting areas programme, the learning environment of 8,120 students (15% Afghans) at 31 public schools improved thanks to new classrooms and the installation of solar energy.

UNHCR also repaired 62 refugee village schools damaged by the 2022 floods, improving learning for 16,000 students. In addition, teachers in refugee village schools and on the Accelerated Learning Programme, along with security guards, were better able to meet their own needs after receiving UNHCR cash assistance. Education supplies supported 56,331 students and efforts to expand digital learning – which included the provision of tablets and LED screens to refugee village schools in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – benefitted more than 50,000 students. UNHCR also initiated digital training for teachers.

To further improve the quality of teaching and support national curriculum implementation, 1,253 teachers (a third women) were trained on subject content and pedagogy. 206 awareness raising sessions and 318 training sessions on child protection, gender-based violence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse were delivered, targeting teachers, school management committees, parent-teacher councils and mother committees. In addition, 96 awareness sessions targeting students led to increased school enrolment.

In Punjab, eight refugee village schools previously run by the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees were preparing to transition to a UNHCR partner from January 2024.

Women's participation in university education continued to steadily increase, rising from 23% in 2021 to 38% in 2023. UNHCR supported 654 refugee students during the year, with 209 graduating with university degrees and 99 newly enrolled (60% women).

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

Refugees and asylum seekers have increased access to livelihood opportunities leading to higher number of self-reliant refugees and asylum-seekers

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	0.00%	12.12%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR played an important role enhancing the lives of refugees through strategic livelihood interventions in 2023. A poverty graduation approach aimed at building refugees' confidence, developing sustainable livelihoods and improving their access to financial services saw 3,000 refugee households benefit from livelihoods assets and training sessions, including in business development, asset management and financial literacy. UNHCR also organized workshops in entrepreneurship skills for 25 tertiary-level DAFI scholarship recipients and offered start-up support. In addition, in partnership with the National Vocation and Technical Training Commission, 1,969 young people from refugee and host communities received training and tool kits in 30 skills across 34 technical institutes.

In Balochistan, more than 500 refugees in 10 villages and Quetta were trained in agriculture and livestock management and provided with various tools to kick-start income generation activities. Another 995 people started certified skills training and received business start-up toolkits, while 80 Pakistanis and 70 refugees attended a workshop facilitated by the National Incubation Centre on entrepreneurship. Following this, 45 received seed funding to establish their businesses.

To promote the work of refugee artisans, a crafts exhibition was organized. Moreover, 14 refugees secured internships in hotel management and solar-dried fruits and vegetables produced by refugees were supplied to various markets.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNHCR trained 1,294 women on more than 12 market-led vocational and technical trades. Another 2,488 young Afghan refugees were given skills training, with 995 receiving toolkits and 198 successfully placed in 99 private businesses. A Business Facilitation Centre was constructed and equipped with tools in Turkmen for carpet weavers and three craft outlets were established in two hotels and a shopping mall to enhance Afghan refugees' market access.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 young refugees and host community members across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received tablets and laptops and skills training. To enhance refugee women's employment opportunities, UNHCR signed a framework of cooperation with the Women's Chamber of Commerce.

The training environment for refugees and asylum-seekers in three public sector vocational training institutions improved following construction upgrades, solarization and the provision of equipment.

The findings of a UNHCR study of skills development and MADE51 projects found a 56% success rate for its poverty graduation programme and a 46% employment rate for those who participated in skills development training.

A labour market survey and value chain analysis in collaboration with the ILO was also concluded to support future evidence-based programming.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

Refugees are able to make informed decisions to return to their country of origin and may avail themselves of the facilitated volrep programme

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, 36,337 people were assisted by UNHCR to return through the voluntary repatriation programme, with the overwhelming majority seeking support in the latter half of the year due to heightened fears of arrest during the implementation of the IFRP. This was a significant increase from the 6,039 Afghan

refugees (1,443 families) who received the same assistance in 2022.

UNHCR enhanced protection counselling at the voluntary repatriation centres following updated UNHCR guidance on the international protection needs of those fleeing from Afghanistan and the withdrawal of Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation from the voluntary repatriation process.

The Office provided individual protection counselling to all adult family members, highlighting the changed circumstances. Due to an increase in demand for return counselling following the IFRP launch, individual counselling was replaced by group counselling activities. Information was also provided on areas of return, focusing on access to services, particularly in the priority areas of return and reintegration. Given the increased demand for facilitated voluntary repatriation, prompted by the implementation of the IFRP, staffing and other resources were redirected to voluntary repatriation centres in the last quarter of the year to ensure adequate case processing and systematic protection counselling. UNHCR conducted community outreach sessions and integrated voluntary repatriation as part of these discussions.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

Resettlement is used as protection tool to ensure the most vulnerable are able to achieve solutions and complementary pathway opportunities are expanded

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7	4,500	4,197
15.2 Average processing time from resettlement submission to departure under normal priority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	198.00	365.00	320.00
15.3 Number of people admitted through complementary pathways from the host country	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		100	106

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugee status determination, resettlement and complementary pathways programmes were strategically used as a protection tool to ensure solutions for the most vulnerable in third countries.

UNHCR increased the number of people it supported with resettlement, submitting 4,198 refugees for resettlement in 10 countries, including 2,001 to Australia, 576 to Canada, 29 to France, 742 to Germany, 253 to Italy, seven to the Netherlands, three to New Zealand, 10 to Norway, 183 to the UK, and 394 to the United States. In total, 590 refugees departed to eight countries, including 42 to Australia, 446 to Canada, 72 to Italy, three to the Netherlands, two to New Zealand, three to Norway, 11 to the UK and 11 to the United States.

Complementary pathways also expanded in 2023, with 106 UNHCR-registered people leaving for eight countries. Among them, 16 left through employment pathways, five through education pathways, and 85 through humanitarian schemes and private sponsorships.

UNHCR's partner, the Society for Human Rights and Prisoners' Aid, continued to implement its labour mobility scheme with Talent Beyond Boundaries. Pakistan was considered a priority "source" country for candidates and 32 people had received job offers through the programme in 2023.

UNHCR worked with the International Refugee Assistance Project and directly with certain countries to

facilitate family reunification for refugees who may already have pending applications or for those who may qualify through a family reunification programme.

The Office collaborated with partners in destination countries and UNHCR offices in other countries to disseminate various scholarship opportunities via its education partners, find solutions and facilitate access to education programmes.

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

UNHCR was actively engaged in ongoing capacity building initiatives for staff and partner colleagues, including interpreters and outreach volunteers in Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar. By improving data collection and recording practices, an evidence-based approach was adopted to enhance understanding of the unique risks and needs refugees with specific needs and disabilities faced. This facilitated expedited identification, assistance and referrals to specialized service providers, while reinforcing comprehensive systems and processes that ensured access to justice, shelter, health and psychological and social support for vulnerable communities.

People with disabilities, particularly women and those with multiple and diverse disabilities, are often marginalized and overlooked within community structures. To mitigate this, UNHCR played a critical role in revitalizing the Aging and Disability Task Force established in 2010. This initiative encompasses a broader intersectional approach and its mandate has been extended to include other minority groups. This task force has been instrumental in highlighting the challenges faced by people with disabilities in accessing life-saving humanitarian aid, enhancing overall protection measures through improved data collection, identifying people with disabilities and their representative organizations, and pooling resources to optimize disability-inclusive strategies. UNHCR's overarching goal remains to better address the needs of people with disabilities and other marginalized groups during humanitarian crises.

Initiatives to enhance gender balance within protection activities in 2023 included the targeted recruitment of female outreach volunteers (37%) and staff and raising the proportion of women on the Helpline team to 47%. Approximately 35% of people who reached out to UNHCR through various communication channels (helpline, protection counselling desk, and protection email inbox) were women, which constituted an increase of 14% from the previous year. In the annual participatory assessment exercise, 50% of those consulted on key thematic areas were women and 46% children. Dedicated key informant interviews were conducted with people with disabilities from each age group to ensure their views and suggestions on UNHCR and partner programming would be reflected in the assessment.

Section 3: Resources

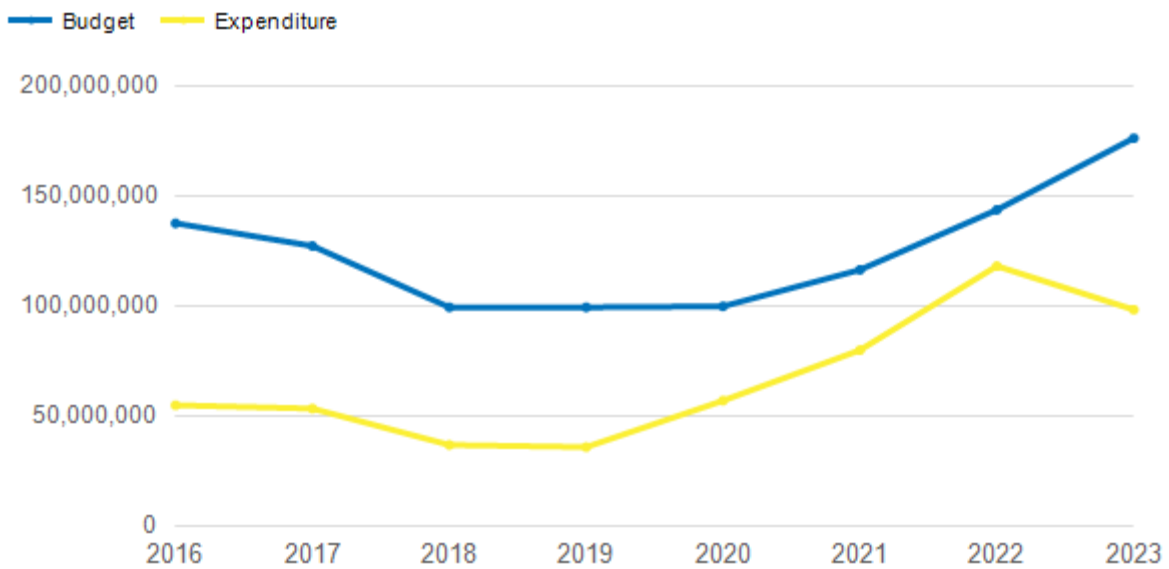
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

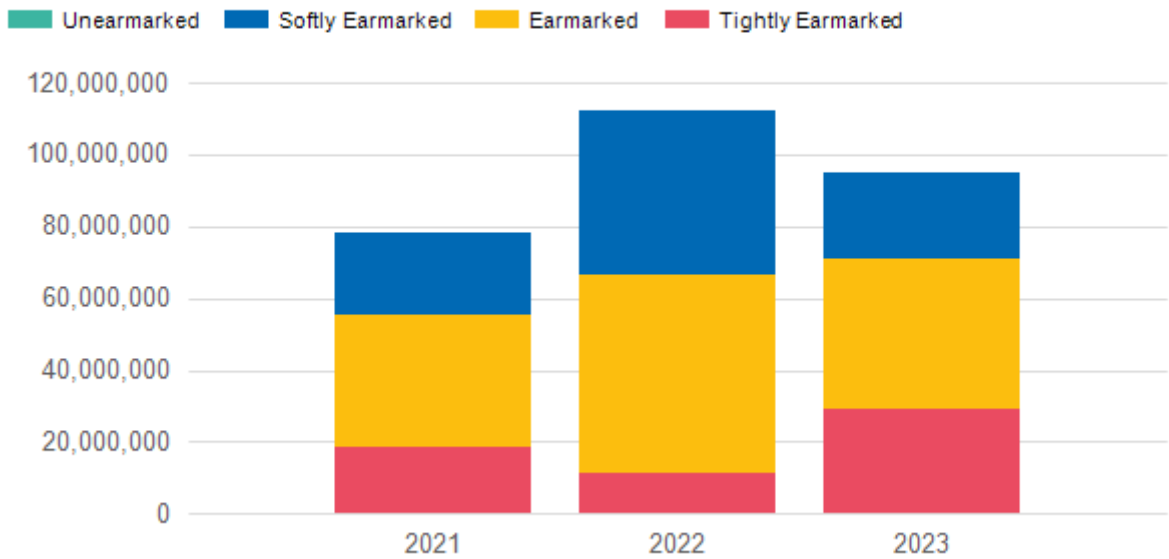
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	20,515,975	9,991,594	48.70%	9,991,594	100.00%
IA3: Empower	141,683,148	73,546,280	51.91%	70,919,846	96.43%
IA4: Solve	13,825,961	17,196,324	124.38%	17,196,324	100.00%
All Impact Areas		7,646,053			
Total	176,025,084	108,380,251	61.57%	98,107,764	90.52%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	7,037,073	3,327,809	47.29%	3,327,809	100.00%
OA2: Status	4,293,455	1,836,237	42.77%	1,836,237	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	5,281,355	2,669,956	50.55%	2,669,956	100.00%
OA4: GBV	9,143,132	9,472,380	103.60%	9,472,380	100.00%
OA5: Children	6,910,506	3,858,659	55.84%	3,858,659	100.00%
OA6: Justice	3,904,092	2,157,593	55.26%	2,157,593	100.00%
OA7: Community	9,608,034	5,482,633	57.06%	5,482,633	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	23,440,365	5,625,996	24.00%	5,625,996	100.00%
OA9: Housing	10,777,113	14,847,515	137.77%	14,847,515	100.00%
OA10: Health	21,887,844	9,729,389	44.45%	9,568,034	98.34%
OA11: Education	34,333,418	12,023,825	35.02%	12,023,825	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	25,582,736	10,403,090	40.66%	10,040,804	96.52%
OA14: Return	8,223,804	9,754,003	118.61%	9,754,003	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	5,602,157	7,442,321	132.85%	7,442,321	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		9,748,847			
Total	176,025,084	108,380,251	61.57%	98,107,764	90.52%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

In 2023, UNHCR continued to run the supplementary flood response programme in Pakistan and received close to \$40 million to address the impact of the devastating floods. 39% of its appeal under the RRP was funded and this allowed the prioritization of both lifesaving interventions and some long-term investments in national systems and refugee hosting areas. After declaring an emergency related to the humanitarian response because of the implementation of the IFRP in November, UNHCR reoriented part of its programming towards strengthening its protection response and border monitoring, as well as its voluntary return programme in Pakistan, to better respond to the rise in returning Afghan refugees.

UNHCR’s primary focus in Pakistan remained on protection, self-reliance and economic inclusion, education and health. The Office was also worked consistently on the introduction of renewable energy

sources both for household and communal use. It implemented its programming both directly and with 37 funded partners, including 25 non-governmental organizations (21 national and four international), seven Government entities and five UN agencies.

Staff numbers increased in 2023 to respond to resettlement needs and the ongoing flood response. At the same time, the Realignment process, including the nationalization of certain positions, was undertaken with consideration made for UNHCR's short- and longer-term strategies as well as the availability of resources. Since no supplementary appeal was established for the emergency response to the IFRP rollout, staffing gaps were addressed through emergency deployments and the temporary recruitment of key protection staff. Programme resources were reprioritized to address emerging protection needs in the field by strengthening partner projects.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

UNHCR's strategic approach to its support and work in Pakistan remains relevant although the IFRP in 2023 made the situation more uncertain and complex for forcibly displaced people. Amidst the fluid operating context, UNHCR undertook a comprehensive approach during its annual planning and programme review exercises and incorporated input from key stakeholders. This included 200 participatory assessments with forcibly displaced people and consultations with partners and Government interlocutors, including the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees. This feedback was particularly important following the launch of the IFRP to reflect identified needs in our response. Meanwhile, an RRP-related exercise helped review and reflect on UNHCR's current multi-year strategy. All these exercises highlighted critical gaps and lessons learned and informed the current as well as future multi-year strategy.

The IFRP roll out increased the need among forcibly displaced people in Pakistan for MHPSS services. It further reiterated the continuing need for strategies and interventions that nurture social cohesion in refugee and host communities. Engagement with host communities and support to national services, including through development actors, remain crucial.

Scaling up targeted cash assistance will allow UNHCR to be more agile in responding to the needs of forcibly displaced and stateless people in Pakistan and will be a priority for the future. Supporting green energy provision and developing programmes that help refugees and host communities mitigate the effects of climate change while improving the quality of their daily life will continue to be important.

Cooperation with development partners in Pakistan has been promising and ensured the sustainability of UNHCR's investments and work with communities in the country and will be critical to advancing the systemic changes needed to establish an asylum system in Pakistan. UNHCR will invest in internal monitoring to effectively and regularly capture its progress towards its multi-year strategy's indicators and milestones.



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