



**REFUGEE
AFFECTED
&
HOSTING
AREAS
(RAHA)
PROGRAM**

PROGRAM BRIEF

Refugee Affected & Hosting Areas (RAHA) Program

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Introduction

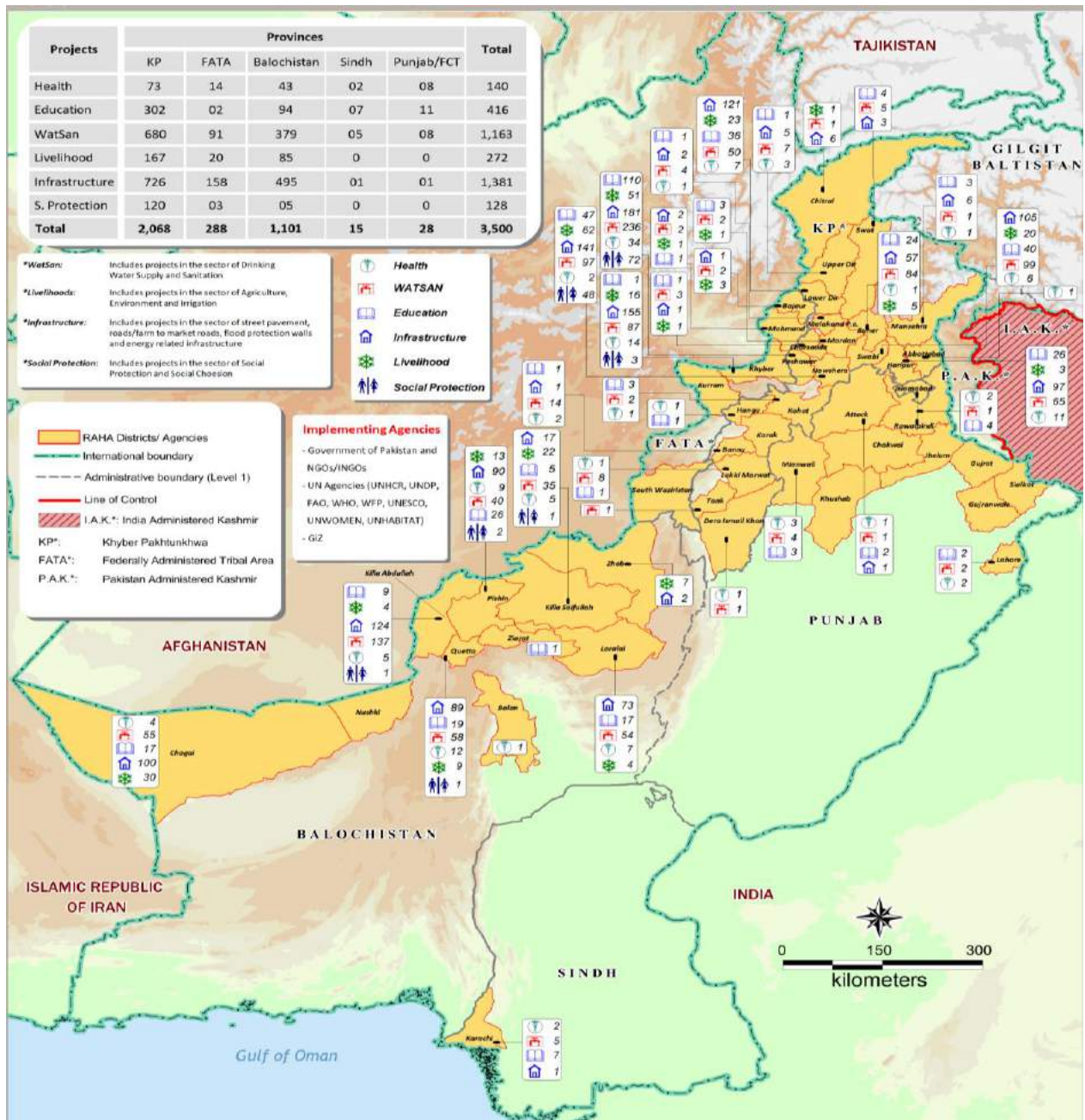
The Government and people of Pakistan have been generously hosting Afghan refugees for over thirty five years as a consequence of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, factional fighting in the post 1992 era, drought in 1999-2000 and post 9/11 situation. While more than 3.9 million have voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan since 2002, over 1.5 million registered refugees remain in Pakistan, constituting the world's largest protracted refugee population. In recognition of the socio-economic, financial, environmental and political consequences of the prolonged stay of refugees on the host country and communities, the 2005 Brussels Conference paved way for the conceptualization of Pakistan's Refugee Affected & Hosting Areas (RAHA) Program, as a unique holistic platform for bridging humanitarian assistance with long-term development.

Under the Framework of the One UN in Pakistan, Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) is a Joint Programme Component within the UN Delivering as One. Launched in 2009 as a five-year Government-led program with financial support from several donor countries and the United Nations; more than 3,500 RAHA projects have been implemented up-to-date across all four Pakistan's provinces and FATA, benefitting 9.4 million Pakistani citizens and 1.2 million Afghan refugees through enhanced access and quality of public service delivery. Targeted projects in the sectors of health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, infrastructure and social protection have been carefully calibrated based on comprehensive needs assessments so as to support the overall objectives of the programme, including importantly improved livelihoods, rehabilitation of environment and enhanced social cohesion between the communities in refugee affected and hosting areas.

RAHA, which is currently being implemented in all four provinces and Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, with two components; Refugee Hosting Areas (RHA) and Refugee Affected Areas (RAA) led by UNHCR and UNDP respectively. It became a fundamental component of the implementation of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) in its phase I 2012-2015 in Pakistan. The programme was conceived on the basis of two needs assessment studies jointly conducted by UNDP and UNHCR, the administrative and convening agents of the programme, respectively, in the target areas. The UNHCR's RAHA initiative is an integral part of efforts to create leverage for the development of refugee-hosting communities affected by the lengthy presence of ARs in Pakistan. RHA is thus incorporated within the UN Delivering as One (DaO), notably in the fields of education; health; WASH; livelihood and infrastructure development.

The RAHA initiative remains a principal responsibility sharing platform for maintaining temporary protection space and enhancing community acceptance of Afghans in Pakistan. The identification of the RAHA projects in 2016-2017 has been calibrated so as to reflect strategic priority focus on youth empowerment through education, skills training and livelihoods support and in line with the phase II of SSAR (2016-2017). It is also an important element of the Government of Pakistan's strategies and policies on the management of Afghan refugees.

RAHA Projects implemented from 2009-2015



Impact of RAHA Projects:

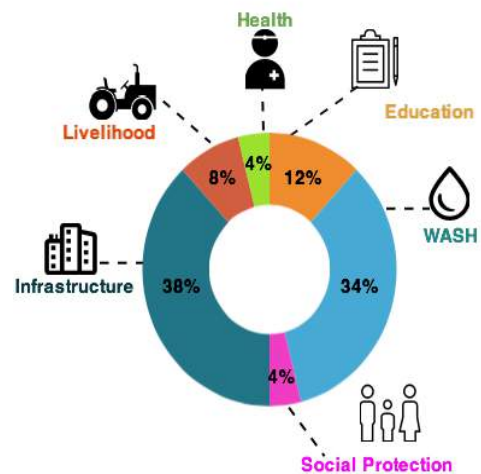
RAHA seeks to increase tolerance and preserve protection space towards Afghans living in Pakistan; improve social cohesion to promote co-existence between the refugees and their host communities with development cum humanitarian assistance. It aims to reduce economic and social vulnerability for the most disadvantaged sections of society living in these past/present hosting areas.

As of December 2015, 10.6 million people have benefited from RAHA projects, of which around 11% are refugees whilst the remainder (9.4 M individuals) are host communities that have been, or are still, affected by the influx of refugees. The beneficiaries of RAHA's

development and humanitarian projects are indicated in the opposite graph. During this time, over 3,500 projects have been implemented, the majority in KP (59%) and Balochistan (31%) with the rest in FATA (8.6%), Punjab and Sindh (1.3%).

These projects were undertaken in five main sectors: Health, Education, WASH (including clean drinking water supply and drains), irrigation, livelihoods (including agriculture, environment and skills development) and Infrastructure (including street pavement, village/farm to market roads, flood protection walls and energy related infrastructure). There are also some social protection/social cohesion interventions (including shelters for women at risk, or unaccompanied minors).

PROJECTS BY SECTOR 2009-2015



Some examples of RAHA's interventions:

- Over 1.5 million individuals benefitted from social services projects including irrigation channels, roads and installation of solar panels.
- Around 50,000 individuals benefitted from WASH projects.
- Some 1.1 million extremely vulnerable individuals have received support.
- 15 welfare centers/safe havens supported for women at risk, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable groups, including a school for blind girls.
- Around 50,000 individuals benefitted from flood protection walls and other environmental conservation projects.
- More than 2,000 people trained in market based income generation skills; around 65% of the women becoming self-employed (tailoring, embroidery, beautician) and earning monthly incomes from 3,500-5,000 PKR.
- 126 development projects in FATA benefitted 91,000 individuals.
- A disease early warning system was implemented and essential medicine and equipment provided across health facilities in Khyber Agency.



Figure: Impact of RAHA interventions

Way forward:

With 64% of the total Afghan refugees below 25 years of age, RAHA in 2016 – 2017 envisages a nexus of interventions in the interlinked areas of education, vocational skills training and livelihoods support to enhance investment in youth empowerment. The youth bulge can be seen as a force for good with greater potential for generating economic growth both while staying in Pakistan and upon returning back to their country.

Having a large number of refugee children population increases the demand for child and youth services especially in education. With UNHCR Pakistan's Refugee Education Strategy 2016-2018 as a guiding tool, RAHA will focus on improving formal and informal education, access to public schools, capacity-building of teachers and SMCs, school maintenance/improvement, provision of textbooks/teaching & learning materials, learning assessments, and certification of degrees to facilitate reintegration in Afghanistan will be the essential features of the education component of RAHA. This will also include scholarships for Tertiary education, opportunities to re-enter formal education, improving access to higher education opportunities (with particular focus on out of school youth) and vocational skill trainings in order to equip the youth with marketable skills. These skills will support them to develop and realize their potential, and enter into gainful employment.

RAHA also aims to strengthen social cohesion & resilience, and reduce the potential for violence in refugee host communities through social mobilization, advocacy tools, and social practices which lead to attaining peaceful coexistence. Adolescent refugees and their peers from host communities will also get to address their unique psycho-social and developmental needs.

In 2016, the program team will advance the efforts with key UN agencies, development actors and donors to identify opportunities for partnerships and synergies in the above mentioned fields of intervention. It will also focus on strengthening and expanding cooperation with key Government counterparts (at federal and provincial levels), national and international NGOs, as well as civil society and community-based organizations and local groups. So far US\$ 5million funding has been secured while more funds are in the pipeline in order to target areas which have not yet benefitted from RAHA interventions.