

**Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees
to support
Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration,
and Assistance to Host Countries**



**Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas Programme
(RAHA)**

Pakistan

September 2013

Objectives and Background

The Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) programme in Pakistan seeks to increase tolerance towards Afghans in Pakistan; improve social cohesion to promote co-existence and provide Afghans with a predictable means of temporary stay. It aims to phase out individual humanitarian assistance and strengthen development whilst simultaneously integrating interventions into the Government's national programmes.

Pakistan has been home to millions of Afghans for the past three decades and, although more than 3.8 million have returned home, around 1.61 million registered Afghans still live in Pakistan. RAHA is a five-year joint initiative launched in 2009 between the Government of Pakistan (GoP), represented by the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, a consortium of UN agencies, a number of Government organisations and non-governmental organisations. It is an integral part of the Government's Afghan Refugees Strategy beyond July 2013 and a key component of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (2012-2014).

Delivering as One and Partnerships

RAHA is an integral component of the UN Disaster Risk Management joint programme operating within the framework of the United Nations Delivering as One initiative in Pakistan. Communities fall into two broadly defined areas: those where millions of Afghan refugees lived for over 30 years before returning home [Refugee-Affected Areas – RAs] and those which are still hosting refugees [Refugee Hosting Areas – HAs]. Development actors cover the former and humanitarian actors cover the latter.

Together with SAFRON, EAD, UNHCR and UNDP, there are currently eight UN agencies involved in RAHA: UNESCO, ILO, UNWOMEN, WFP, FAO, UNOPS and UNHABITAT and WHO. The *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) joined the programme in 2009 as an operational partner.

One example of the UN Agencies working together and building on each other's comparative advantage is found in the collaboration with three *Tehsils* (the smallest administrative unit at agency level) in Khyber Agency, FATA. These *Tehsils* are benefitting from the synergy of UN agencies working in the same area, together with their respective Government line departments.

Management and Coordination

As the Convening Agency, UNHCR is responsible for coordination, information sharing and reporting on all RAHA project activities and contributions. UNDP is the Administrative Agency.

The SAFRON RAHA Cell is responsible for HA projects, providing technical expertise, monitoring and evaluation, whilst UNHCR leads a RAHA Secretariat that is responsible for coordination, information-sharing and reporting.

Provincial Task Forces (PTFs) are currently convened by the Additional Chief Secretary, Planning and Development Department for RA projects and by the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CAR) for HA projects, and comprise representatives from the relevant provincial line departments, UNHCR, UNDP and GIZ. The FATA Task Force is convened by the Secretary of Planning and Development, FATA Secretariat.

Implementation

Coverage and Sectors

RAHA is currently rolled out in 41 districts in the Provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh and in five agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Interventions cover the sectors of health, education, water and sanitation, community infrastructure (including irrigation and farm-to-market roads), environment and, to a limited extent, livelihoods. Urban development was included in 2013.

Employment and income-generating activities form part of the agricultural and environmental rehabilitation programmes with emphasis on the special needs of vulnerable groups, especially women.



Selection

The needs of both refugee and hosting communities form the basis of the project selection that is carried out in close coordination with the communities themselves to encourage participation and ownership as well as sustainability of the projects. The latter is supported through capacity-building interventions within the communities including repair and maintenance of the projects.

Community participation

RAHA has a bottom-up participatory approach based on community development and social cohesion. Civil society organisations and NGOs facilitate social mobilisation and strengthen the capacity of communities to plan, implement and manage their resources.

Small to medium scale community infrastructure projects target identified community needs and Government line departments, primarily at the district and sub-district levels, provide a range of support services.

Impact

Since the launch of RAHA in 2009, the Government of Pakistan, the UN Agencies and GIZ have carried out 1,779 projects that have benefited 3.9 million people, of whom 15% are Afghan refugees. Around 60% of these projects address infrastructure and a further 25% address water and sanitation needs in communities. Notwithstanding their present employment challenges, communities have prioritized these two sectors partly because these types of projects have a wider coverage than vocational training projects that target individuals.

In 2013, UN agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNESCO) and GIZ launched 699 new RAHA projects in the sectors of health, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure and livelihoods.

UNHCR is currently working, with its implementing partners and with the Government, on 165 projects approved towards the end of 2012 or in 2013.

Infrastructure projects support livelihoods through:

- Almost 200 community infrastructure projects have benefitted over 127,000 beneficiaries. Building / repairing bridges and roads (e.g. 141 kilometers of farm-to-market roads) has impacted positively on the lives of 200,000 individuals;
- Improving irrigation - 70 irrigation channel/ water courses constructed to irrigate nearly 3,500 acres of land have ensured efficient water use and improved productivity of the land;
- Protecting crops (and homes) through flood protection walls and check dams - the construction of more than 30 flood protection walls now protects 29 villages and three Afghan refugee villages from flood damage.

Communities have been taught repair and maintenance skills in order to ensure sustainability of the projects, e.g. over 1,600 community organizations (comprising more than 40,000 individuals); 63 village-organizations (of which 27 are female organizations); over 1,000 monitoring committees which ensure participatory development and monitoring in remote areas; and nearly 700 government officials (14 % women) have been trained in participatory monitoring and evaluation, innovation in project cycle management and information technology.

There has also been a positive impact in other areas such as: improved living environment, especially for women and children; improved access to protection, especially for vulnerable people such as the hearing impaired, orphans and drug addicts; increased access to health, particularly in FATA; and the general capacity building of government officials.

RAHA and the Millennium Development Goals

RAHA interventions support Pakistan's Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators.

- MDG 1 Poverty and Hunger
 - **Reducing the number of people living below 637.54 PKR** (around USD 6) per month: reclamation of 148 acres of fertile land; establishing seven orchards for small farmers; nearly 2,000 community members (51% women) have been trained in market-based income generation skills – 65% of the women are now self-employed with monthly incomes of 3,500-5,000 PKR (USD 33-47); 2,384 (41% women) community members have been trained in basic skills such as record keeping, utilizing banking services, conflict resolution, leadership community management; and implementing community level projects.
- MDG 2 Education
 - **Increased access to primary education:** nearly 800 students benefited from the repair of five schools.
- MDG 7 Environment Sustainability
 - **Improved sustainable access to safe drinking water:** some 230,000 people benefited from over 250 clean drinking water projects (hand and solar pumps, supply systems, and overhead /household level water storage tanks).
 - **increased access to improved sanitation:** around 40,000 people benefited from 148 sanitation projects which included 441 latrines (75% built in Balochistan, the remainder in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and sewerage systems; 1,200 community members have been trained in solid/ liquid waste management.
 - **Improved forest cover:** Over 440,000 saplings were planted for a sustainable supply of timber fuel wood and forage; more than 40,000 saplings plants planted in state owned forests; shelter belts have been established with some 150,000 saplings; and 18 nurseries created producing 10,000 saplings each.

Achievements

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The last comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) was undertaken in the Provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces in 2006. UNHCR, in close collaboration with the Government, conducted a new needs assessment in 2012/2013 to cover all four provinces and provide a basis to prioritize the 2013 and 2014 interventions; identifying gaps in planning and development; avoiding over-lap and providing information to improve the complementarity of projects. Both primary and secondary data were used; the former involving all stakeholders, using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Analysis of the results indicated the need to improve existing schools (primary, middle and high); complement existing health facilities and/or establish hospitals at the district levels; establish vocational training centres; establish / improve water supplies (such as tube wells, hand pumps, water storage facilities, water purification and recycling plants); and install / improve sewage systems. Sufficient skilled personnel (such as teachers and nurses) were lacking throughout the districts assessed. Social welfare needs to be enhanced through the establishment of orphanages and centres for special needs children.

Information Management

UNDP launched a Management Information System (MIS) in September 2013. Pending further discussions on data compatibility, UNHCR is compiling a temporary repository of data for projects undertaken by UNHCR and its partners, but also the other RAHA operational partners. The collected data will eventually be uploaded into the main system, presently being developed by SAFRON/CCAR, to provide a joint MIS RAHA system.

RAHA Secretariat

In May 2013, a newly constructed building (built by UNHCR and UNOPS) was opened to house representatives from the United Nations agencies, SAFRON and CCAR and to better support coordination and planning within a RAHA Secretariat.

Challenges

Under the Government of Pakistan's 18th Constitutional Amendment, most sectors were decentralized to the Provinces, while other policy responsibilities, such as refugee matters remain at the Federal level. The Government is currently reviewing its structure and the RAHA process, in line with the recommendations from a study it commissioned in 2012, to streamline the process of project selection and approval; improve capacity at Federal and Provincial levels; reduce possible duplication; enhance its advisory /strategic role; increase monitoring and evaluation; and improve communication and media awareness.

RAHA serves as a useful platform to bring together interested humanitarian and development actors for the benefit of Afghan refugees and local communities. However, there is a need to move from a humanitarian focus to a stronger development focus.

Funding and Requirements

RAHA has received generous support from the international community both in the form of technical assistance and financial support. The key donors are Australia, the European Union, Denmark, Germany, Japan and the USA. The Government of Pakistan/SAFRON and GIZ have also provided support to the programme and have implemented their contributions directly.

In the first phase of the RAHA initiative that started in 2009 the programme (primarily through UNHCR and UNDP) received around USD 136 million in contributions out of the total requirements of USD 140 million. As one of the humanitarian actors, UNHCR has invested approximately USD 36 million in community-based interventions in areas hosted by large number of Afghan refugees.

Under the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, the RAHA programme has been expanded and covers a second three-year phase (2012-2014). The total requirements are USD 495 million.

A portfolio of unfunded projects (covering various sectors and locations) is being established to facilitate contributions from the international community and accelerate implementation in 2014 and beyond.