



Mental health and psychosocial support in central, eastern and south-eastern regions of Afghanistan Improving the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of vulnerable returnees, IDPs, refugees and host communities

Country

Afghanistan

Location

Kabul, Logar, Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan, Khost and Paktya provinces

Duration

July - Dec 2023

Donors

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Background

The consequences of the long war and unrest, and the repeated political changes in Afghanistan have manifested in many social, political, economic, health and environmental forms. Among others, Afghanistan still has one of the worst health indicators in the world and mental health disorders are alarmingly high.

Experiences of displacement due to armed conflict, persecution or disasters put significant psychological and social stress on individuals, families, and communities. The ways in which refugees experience and respond to loss, pain, disruption and violence vary significantly and may in various ways affect their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing or increase their vulnerability to developing mental health problems. Often, reactions to disruptive situations are normal and can be overcome with time. Many refugees, IDPs, returnees and host community will be able to cope with these difficult experiences, and even build resilience if psychosocial support is available.

Objectives

The objective is to reduce suffering and improve the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of vulnerable groups of returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and host communities in selected priority areas of return and re-integration (PARRs) of Kabul, Logar, Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan, Khost and Paktya provinces.

It will strive to provide quality MHPSS services through existing public health facilities and Women-Friendly Health Spaces (WFHSs) and through capacity strengthening.

Activities

- Provision of MHPSS services through 17 existing health facilities under the basic package of health services (BPHS), including 1 district hospital, 1 comprehensive health centre+, 13 basic health centres and 2 secondary health centres;
- Provision of community-based psychosocial services through the establishment of Women Friendly Health Spaces (WFHSs) in 21 locations, consisting of 8 in Kabul province, 2 in Logar, 3 in Nangarhar, 2 in Laghman, 2 in Kunar, 1 in Nuristan, 1 in Paktya and 2 in Khost;
- Build the capacity of UNHCR partners, 380 community health workers (CHWs) and community elders in Psychological First Aid (PFA) training. The trained persons will listen to, observe and connect persons of concern to required MHPSS services in the vicinity;
- Strengthen the knowledge and skills of 30 medical doctors through the WHO mhGAP training in target BPHS health facilities to support people living with mental health problems through pharmacologic and non-pharmacological intervention;

- Boost the knowledge and skills of service providers directly involved in counselling beneficiaries through the provision of Problem Management Plus (PM+) training according to the WHO strategy. A total of 116 individuals consisting of 63 females (17 female psychosocial counsellors in target BPHS health facilities, 21 female psychosocial support officers in target WFHSs, and 25 female counsellors of the UNHCR partner organisations), and 53 males (18 male psychosocial counsellors in target BPHS health facilities, and 35 male counsellors from UNHCR partner organisations).

With support from



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is an international non-profit organisation that supports communities in fragile and conflict affected settings to regain control and maintain their own health and wellbeing. We believe that everyone has the inner strength to (re)build a better future for themselves and those around them.

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