

AFGHANISTAN

Complex Emergency Response

Situation report #1 | 15 September 2021

World Vision is responding to the devastating impact of conflict, COVID-19, and climate change that has left more than half of Afghanistan's population – **over 18 million people** – in need of humanitarian assistance.

Ten million of them are children.
Millions face starvation.

Our goal: To respond to the acute survival needs and ensure protection of vulnerable children and their families.
We aim to reach one million Afghans - half of them girls and boys

Our response objectives are to:

- Improve food security for vulnerable households
- Reduce acute malnutrition and disease
- Increase lasting access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services
- Prevent and respond to the immediate protection concerns of conflict-affected boys and girls



Overview of the Humanitarian Situation:



World Vision has mobilised life-saving mobile health and nutrition clinics and has distributed food to vulnerable families in western Afghanistan. Other humanitarian and development operations will start up once assurances about staff safety, unhindered access to those in need whoever they are, and the rights of women to work are in place.¹



Malnutrition and hunger are widespread with **2.7m people facing starvation**². Half of all children under 5 – approximately one million children – are acutely malnourished.³ More than 65 percent of Afghanistan's 35 million people are young people⁴ and in great need.



Afghanistan is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, with overseas aid flows accounting for 42.9 percent of its \$19.8 billion GDP in 2020.⁵ The economy is at serious risk of collapse without access to humanitarian and development funding. Aid agencies like World Vision – that are largely staffed by nationals – are desperate to get back to work saving lives, meeting needs and rolling out a full range of programmes.

¹ The only exception to this is when life-saving programming is required, and assurances on women staff and beneficiary presence has not been given by local authorities.

² www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1154300/?iso3=AFG

³ www.unicef.org/uk/press-releases/around-10-million-children-in-afghanistan-need-humanitarian-assistance-to-survive-says-unicef/

⁴ <http://www.unrefugees.org.au/emergency-response/afghanistan-emergency/>

⁵ www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview



People Reached
12,244 girls, boys, women and men

Key Messages

Children need help now to meet urgent survival needs caused by decades of conflict, climate change, drought, food insecurity, displacement and COVID-19. Afghan girls and boys are among the world's most vulnerable children. Over half of all under-fives face acute malnutrition if they don't get aid immediately. **Children and their families need safe drinking water, proper hygiene, and sanitation, access to emergency health services, and emergency food to prevent disease and death.**

The humanitarian crisis can only be tackled if there is safe and unhindered **humanitarian access**, sufficient, flexible, and sustained **international funding**, and both **male and female aid workers** can operate as part of response teams.

All parties are called on to comply with international humanitarian law and **respect and protect human rights**, including those of women, girls, and ethnic and religious minorities. The right to access livelihoods and education opportunities must be available to women and girls without discrimination.

All Afghan girls and boys need to be **protected from violence** and have the right to **education**. Education is essential to the full development and protection of every child, so girls and boys can enjoy fullness of life and contribute to society

World Vision has been present in Afghanistan for 20 years, has more than 300 experienced and specialist staff, and will **stay and deliver** life-saving humanitarian and development assistance. In total, we have impacted six million lives. We are neutral, independent and impartial, and deliver assistance based on need, irrespective of creed, colour, ethnicity or religious belief. Working in partnership with faith leaders, local organisations and donor agencies is an essential part of our work.

Key Concerns:



The emerging roll-back of fundamental rights and their significantly gendered impact on access to basic services is causing concern. Uncertainty is eroding the hard-won right of Afghan women and girls to access health care, livelihoods and education, with some schools starting and others closed and waiting for guidance. Despite public statements by the Taliban leadership expressing commitment to human rights there remains a lack of clarity, including at provincial level, whether women can safely and freely work, travel or visit projects and if so, under what conditions and risks.



The banking system is barely functioning. It is short of local and foreign currency reserves and banks haven't fully reopened. There is a lack of cash, workers cannot be paid and people are running short of money. There is a serious risk of the economy collapsing which would lead to a worsening humanitarian crisis and the threat of mass people movements.



The economy is hit by inflation, price spikes, and shortages that are driving up food, fuel and transportation costs. Family savings and spending power are being eroded. This could be worsened by potential economic sanctions.



All borders appear open for trade and some, for people movement. However, there are no customs tax formalities making the shipment of relief goods uncertain. This is hampering the flow of core imports. This, combined with the effects of drought, could have a disastrous effect on the food security situation.



Airports are reopening, including for some international and domestic and cargo flights but services are very limited, hindering the flow of aid.



There are just weeks left to get food aid prepositioned into remote regions before winter snows arrive, cutting off remote areas. Food aid also needs to reach internally displaced people. More than 3.5 million people are internally displaced.



Aid agencies are juggling to manage response operations, deliver them in line with humanitarian principles and ensure staff safety, while also supporting staff who wish to leave Afghanistan.



Humanitarian actors agree that humanitarian principles must be respected when delivering assistance but there are questions on how to implement this when programmes urgently need to start, if lives are to be saved.

Advocacy

Throughout the response, World Vision has been advocating at local, national, regional and global levels to ensure that the rights and needs of boys and girls are protected and prioritised by key decision makers, including the Taliban, as well as donors, governments, and humanitarian actors, in their strategies, policies, and operations.

We ask for:

Safe and unhindered humanitarian access:

It is crucial that those in need – including women, girls, boys, and members of ethnic and religious minorities – can access humanitarian assistance without discrimination. The ability of female aid workers to safely and freely operate is indispensable to ensure principled humanitarian action and that women and girls have access to life-saving services.

Sufficient, flexible and sustained funding:

Despite increasingly urgent needs, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has been only 39% funded. With the new flash appeal of 5 September asking for \$193.1 million additional funding, World Vision calls on donors to deliver on the funding pledges they promised at the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation on 13 September. The needs and rights of boys and girls must be prioritised in funding strategies and decisions, including through the integration of gender equity measures. We call on donors to help cover the increased costs facing humanitarian actors in the current context.

Support for Afghans who left or are leaving:

We call on governments, including neighbouring countries, to keep their borders open and allow access to their territory to Afghans seeking safety and protection, especially women, children, ethnic and religious minorities, journalists, activists, and human rights defenders. We also call on them to suspend deportations and forcible returns of Afghan nationals and adopt a moratorium on repatriations. We ask governments to support current asylum seekers in their territory and upscale resettlement and special visa programmes.

Protection for impartial humanitarian assistance:

We call on decision-makers to ensure that sanctions or counterterrorism measures do not impact impartial humanitarian activities, and that waivers, licences or other relevant mechanisms are in place in this regard.

Response highlights:



Health and Nutrition: Mobile health and nutrition programmes have restarted in Herat and Ghor provinces. These are focused on providing primary health care – and are a first point of contact for people from host and displaced communities who are sick. They also assess the nutritional status of children, pregnant and lactating women. Some 50% of girls and boys attending are malnourished. Our mobile health clinics, which are staffed by women and men, have met the health needs of 1,262 people (117 girls, 80 boys, 633 women, 432 men) in Ghor province and 2,400 people in Herat.



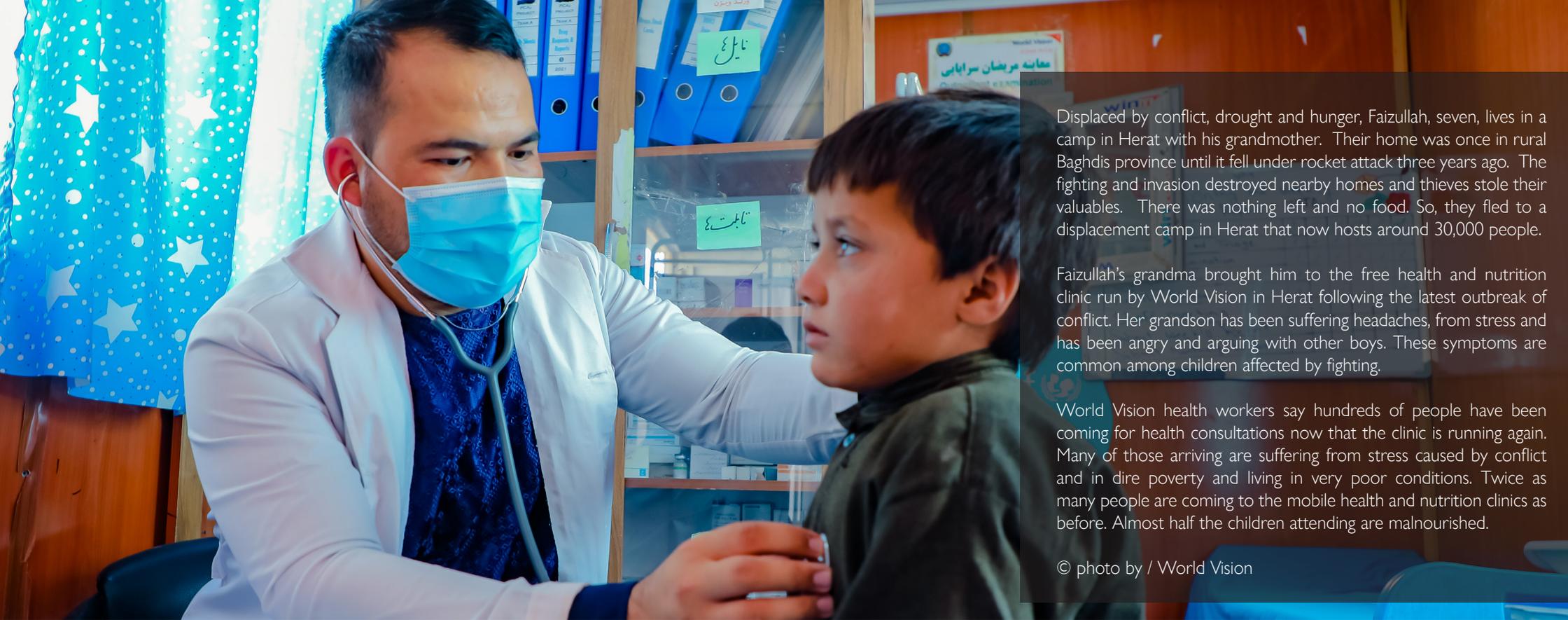
Food assistance: Life-saving WFP food distributions, run by male staff, have started in Ghor province and have so far met the needs of 8,582 people. Distributions are also being readied in Baghdis and Ghor provinces for the last week of September.



World Vision **offices in Kabul and Herat are functioning** with core female and male staff and liaising with de facto authorities to get programmes going or restarted.



On 13 September, World Vision delivered a statement during the **High-Level Ministerial Meeting** on the Humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, advocating for the prioritisation of the rights and needs of children in humanitarian funding strategies and commitments. A recording of the meeting is available here: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k10/k1070yxxqu>



Displaced by conflict, drought and hunger, Faizullah, seven, lives in a camp in Herat with his grandmother. Their home was once in rural Baghdis province until it fell under rocket attack three years ago. The fighting and invasion destroyed nearby homes and thieves stole their valuables. There was nothing left and no food. So, they fled to a displacement camp in Herat that now hosts around 30,000 people.

Faizullah's grandma brought him to the free health and nutrition clinic run by World Vision in Herat following the latest outbreak of conflict. Her grandson has been suffering headaches, from stress and has been angry and arguing with other boys. These symptoms are common among children affected by fighting.

World Vision health workers say hundreds of people have been coming for health consultations now that the clinic is running again. Many of those arriving are suffering from stress caused by conflict and in dire poverty and living in very poor conditions. Twice as many people are coming to the mobile health and nutrition clinics as before. Almost half the children attending are malnourished.

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We would like to thank the generous donors:



Learn more about World Vision's response:
www.wvi.org/emergencies/afghanistan



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