

AFGHANISTAN

Complex Emergency Response

Situation report #2 | 05 October 2021

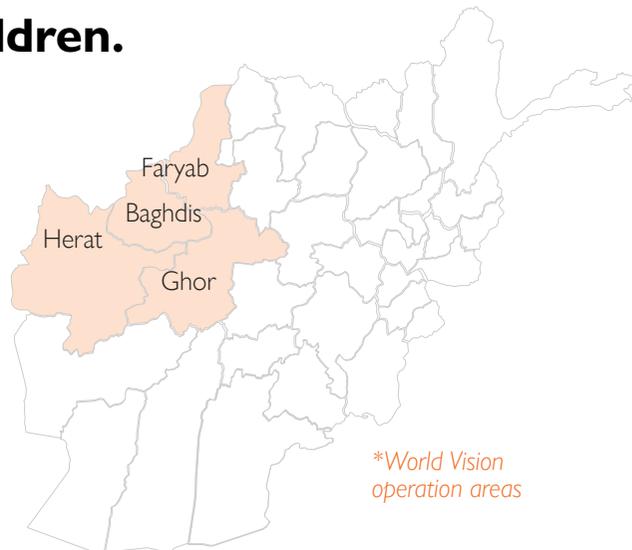
World Vision is responding to the devastating impact of conflict, COVID-19, and climate change that has left more than half of Afghanistan's population – **over 18 million people** – in need of humanitarian assistance.

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 relaunched programmes in four western provinces where it operates: Herat, Ghor, Faryab and Badghis. Activities across the region include life-saving mobile health and nutrition clinics, WFP food distributions, support for primary school education and access to safe water and sanitation.



Assurances for the equal rights of females to carry out humanitarian work and to be present as the recipients of aid have been secured either at national or provincial level, allowing the scale up response activities. This result is the outcome of the humanitarian community working in unity for women's rights to be protected.



Malnutrition and hunger are widespread with **2.7m people facing starvation**.¹ Half of all children under 5 – approximately one million children – are acutely malnourished.² More than 65% of Afghanistan's 35 million people are young people 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 2020.³ 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.



People Reached
21,681 girls, boys, women and men

¹ www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1154300/?iso3=AFG

² www.unicef.org/uk/press-releases/around-10-million-children-in-afghanistan-need-humanitarian-assistance-to-survive-says-unicef/

³ www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview

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.

Response highlights:



Offices in three of the four provinces where World Vision has humanitarian and development operations have reopened: in Herat, Ghor and Faryab. This follows assurances that both male and female humanitarian staff can safely operate and that women and men, girls and boys can benefit from response activities without discrimination.



World Vision now has life-saving mobile **health and nutrition** teams operating in the three 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. Mobile health clinics, staffed by women and men, have met the health needs of 10,775 people (2,053 girls, 1,673 boys, 5,004 women, 2,045 men), for the period 5-26 September, 2021.



Primary education support activities have started in Ghor, ensuring girl and boy pupils and those in community-based classes have access to socially distanced learning, increased teacher numbers and are kept safe from COVID-19 through the provision of water, soaps and masks. 31,269 girls and 75,959 boys have so far benefited. The project aims to reach 87,492 in-school pupils and 19,736 children in community classes.



WFP **food assistance** operations are up and running in Ghor, Faryab and in Badghis.⁴ In recent days 10,906 individuals have received food via distributions. Both Ghor and Faryab are suffering the worst hunger in Afghanistan.⁵



Work on building **solar powered bore wells** is also due to start in Badghis and Ghor to ensure the provision of clean drinking water.



Following our engagement in the High-level Ministerial meeting on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan in mid-September, we have been supporting national and global joint advocacy efforts focusing on girls' access to secondary education and humanitarian funding, in coordination with coalitions.

⁴ World Vision has not yet secured assurances from the provincial authorities for women to be working but this programmes has gone ahead due to its urgent life-saving nature.

⁵ <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1154300/?iso3=AFG>

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 funding commitments to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) pledges totaling US\$1.2m must be converted into cash. 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 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 further 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.

Key Concerns:



Of the US\$1.2 billion pledged for Afghan humanitarian and development aid at September's High-Level Ministerial Meeting, as of September 27 only \$131 million had been received - 21.7% of what is required this year. Pledges need to be converted into hard cash.



The roll-back of fundamental rights and their significantly gendered impact on access to basic services is causing concern. The hard-won human rights of Afghan women and girls to access health care, livelihoods and education are already being threatened. Despite public statements by the Taliban expressing commitment to human rights, the Taliban are curtailing access to secondary education for girls, and multiple credible sources report human rights abuses, including against ethnic and religious minorities. In some provinces, the Taliban at local level have not yet provided assurances that both male and female humanitarian workers can safely and freely work, travel or visit projects.



The Taliban have not been recognised as the official government by any international government. This and other funding, financing and donor restrictions and requirements are hampering the flow of funding into the country and efforts by humanitarian agencies and state bodies to pay staff and cover operation costs. On 24 September, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued two general licenses authorising humanitarian activities in Afghanistan and for transactions related to the exportation or re-exportation of agricultural commodities, medicine, medical devices, replacement parts and components, or software updates in Afghanistan. This should ease World Vision's ability to pay taxes, fees, and duties but other governments also have funding and due diligence requirements that must be met.



The banking system is struggling with a lack of liquidity and limiting access to funds. It is short of local and foreign currency reserves. Salaries are going unpaid and people are running short of money and being forced to sell family assets to survive.



The economy is hit by shortages that are driving up food, fuel and transportation costs.

...Key Concerns:

 All borders appear open for trade and some, for people movement. The UN Humanitarian Air Service is only operating between Islamabad and Kabul. There are limited international and domestic flights. Visas are available on entry but those using the UN flight route need to have visas for Pakistan too, and the application process is slow.

 There are no customs tax formalities making the shipment of relief goods uncertain. This is hampering the flow of core imports. WFP is managing to ship food across the Pakistan border.

 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, while also supporting staff who wish to leave Afghanistan.

 The Afghan health system, whose funding is administered by the World Bank, is on the point of collapse. Hospitals are running out of medicines, doctors and nurses are unpaid, or leaving Afghanistan, and health services are closing or partially operating. This comes as the country potentially faces a fourth wave of COVID-19 and a malnutrition crisis.



World Vision Afghanistan National Director Asuntha Charles meets children impacted by hunger and malnutrition. © photo by / World Vision

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

We would like to thank
the generous donors:



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