AFGHANISTAN
IFRC Country Office

BACKGROUND

This document details IFRC priorities and operational plan in support of Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) outreach and development in 2020.

Country Profile

Afghanistan has been in a state of protracted conflicts for over 40 years. The number of civilians killed rose in 2019 while 17 million people (50% of the population) live in areas highly affected by conflicts.

The country is ranked 168 out of 189 countries for its Human Development Index. According to the Fragile State Index, Afghanistan is in a state of high alert as the ninth most fragile country in the world. Life expectancy (at birth) is estimated at 62.7 years and adult literacy rate at 38%. Afghanistan ranked 153 out of 160 countries for its Gender Inequality Index (2017): for every 100,000 live births, 396 women die from pregnancy-related causes. Female participation in the labour market is 19.5% compared to 86.7% for men.
As a fragile context, Afghanistan presents a wide range of combined vulnerabilities that echo the IFRC World Disaster Report: Leaving No One Behind:

**Out of sight:** Poverty would affect up to 80% of the population.

**Out of the loop:** The country has faced a massive food crisis with 13.5 million people considered as food insecure.

**Out of reach:** The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) increased to over 3.4 million, with over 220,000 IDPs in the first eight months of 2019, 58% of them being children, and most of them living in hard-to-reach areas.

**Out of money:** More than 9 million people would need urgent humanitarian assistance according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) while humanitarian funds have tended to decrease over the past years.

**Out of scope:** Female-headed displaced households were more vulnerable in relation to unstable income sources, employment, and access to markets, reducing their level of resilience. Displaced households headed by a person with disability are also less resilient in terms of livelihoods, reporting lower levels of employment of household members, and a higher reliance on borrowing/loans (OCHA).

The country is highly prone to disasters, whose frequency and intensity are exacerbated by the effects of climate change. The 2018 drought was described as ‘the worst in a lifetime’ and led to the displacement of some 275,000 Afghans. Nearly all its 34 provinces have been affected by at least one natural disaster over the past 30 years. In 2018, the lives and livelihoods of more than 4 million Afghan people were threatened by floods, storms, droughts, and landslides, which is almost three times more than the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance on account of conflict.

IFRC Country Plan has been established to address some of the most pressing and continued needs, in support of ARCS, with a focus on bridging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as a pre-requisite to enable contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

**National Society Profile**

The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) was instituted in 1934 with the aim to alleviate human suffering and provide support to the victims of man-made and natural disasters all over Afghanistan. Headquartered in Kabul, ARCS has a countrywide presence with 34 provincial branches, 7 regional offices, and a network of 1,900 staff and 30,000 trained volunteers and youth members, with unparalleled access to hard-to-reach communities, including in areas controlled by Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs).

As auxiliary to public authorities, and under a Red Crescent Law that recognises its independence and neutrality, ARCS has developed close relations with key
Ministers (such as for Public Health, Education, among others) and Agencies (such as the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority). At local level, ARCS branches have the capacity to negotiate access to communities to deliver principled humanitarian action to those in need. The main activities and services ARCS are recognised for range from relief distribution, to primary healthcare clinics and hospital structures, to community-based health and first aid, to disaster risk reduction, youth education, or school safety.

ARCS provide a country-wide contribution to access to healthcare services and diseases prevention through a national network of 10 health subcentres, 46 basic health centres, one district hospital, and 31 mobile health teams (MHTs) covering 29 provinces in the 7 regions of the country. ARCS is the only organisation in Afghanistan that provides congenital heart defect treatment, which benefits 8,000 patients across the country. The National Society also manages 5 marastoons (social welfare centres) whose main goal is to provide temporary asylum for widows, underprivileged families, or people with disabilities.

In 2018, ARCS reached 3.5 million people through health services and programmes and 53,000 people affected by disasters.

Role of the IFRC Country Office in Afghanistan

The IFRC has been active since 1990 in Afghanistan where its country office enjoys a status agreement as an International Organisation. The office operates as a technical support and collaboration platform to support ARCS development and outreach, with a strong focus on improving coordination and developing cooperation with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and non-Movement actors. IFRC technical support to programme development reflects global strategic priorities articulating emergency response, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods, health, WASH, livelihoods, gender and inclusion as well as cross-cutting programmatic focus on climate change and women empowerment.

Movement Footprint

The ICRC is the main Movement operator in Afghanistan where the organisation has developed over the past 30 years a widespread footprint in health programmes, through a supported network of clinics, hospitals, and orthopaedic centres, and in protection, especially through Restoring Family Links (RFL) and detention activities. The ICRC has also advanced expertise in monitoring the conduct of hostilities with a view to promoting International Humanitarian Law (IHL) or preventing IHL violations. Norwegian Red Cross has also grown its engagement in Afghanistan with a focus on medical facilities and mobile health teams. Over the years, the Canadian Red Cross has enabled critical achievements in supporting disaster management and Afghan Red Crescent organisational development. Other Movement actors involved in Afghanistan, bilaterally or multilaterally, include Finnish Red Cross (Community-based health and WASH), Japan Red Cross (youth, health and climate change), Kuwait Red Crescent (women empowerment), British Red Cross (WASH and cash), Qatar Red Crescent (health), Danish Red Cross (psychosocial support), and Turkish Red Crescent (health).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS OF FOCUS</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>People will be made resilient against disasters, including in schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELTER</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>People will be supported with shelter services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC NEEDS</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>People will benefit from services to support their livelihoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>People will directly benefit from health services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>People will access clean water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion, including in schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>People will benefit from protection and inclusion services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGRATION</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>People will benefit from humanitarian services.</td>
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STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES
- ENSURE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT
- INFLUENCE OTHERS AS LEADING STRATEGIC PARTNERS
- ENSURE A STRONG IFRC
AREA OF FOCUS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

IFRC operational plan on disaster risk reduction (DRR) is meant to support ARCS priorities which foresee to scaling-up its contribution to community resilience by reaching 3 million people within the next three years through expanded community-based disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation programmes, early warning early action capabilities as well as school safety, with a focus on the most at-risk provinces and districts. Linkage will be sought with the ongoing drought and floods emergency operation, including through awareness-raising and community communication. The plan will also be part of ARCS priority development on school safety with a target of reaching 10% of the schools in the country. The integrated school safety approach will include sensitisation on DRR and safer school model to also engage youth and students as community disseminators and multipliers of safety measures in hazard-prone areas.

In line with the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency (ANDMA) Strategic Framework 2018–2028 and the Road Map for Implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015–2030 in Afghanistan, IFRC DRR support plan will also aim at strengthening national and local disaster readiness of ARCS, including through a multi-hazard contingency plan, the strengthening of disaster law in Afghanistan, a pre-disaster agreement, and mainstreaming of gender-sensitive and climate-smart approaches to DRR.
1. **Climate action** to include community awareness-raising and preparedness and planting of 30,000 trees across 5 provinces and 12 districts at risk.

2. **Early warning early action** to be enabled through early warning protocols in 12 provinces and supported by local contingency plans.

3. **School safety** to cover 80 schools and carrying out-of-school safety activities to enable students to gain knowledge of common disasters and the capacity to apply and disseminate this knowledge to develop a culture of safety in their community.

4. **Contingency planning**: A multi-hazard contingency plan is finalised at the national level and for 12 most-at-risk provinces

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**2018**: 

- The lives and livelihoods of more than 4 million Afghan people were threatened by floods, storms, droughts, and landslides.

- Described as ‘the worst in a lifetime,’ 2018 droughts led to the displacement of some 275,000 Afghans across the Northern and Western regions, 52,000 more than the number uprooted by conflict.

- In the Risk Inform Index (2018), Afghanistan ranked 4th most at-risk country (7,8) in terms of risk exposure, vulnerability, and ability to cope.
AREA OF FOCUS

SHELTER

**Shelter and displacement:** Provision of shelter remains a prevailing need of IDPs upon arrival at displacement sites. According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) flow monitoring survey (April 2019), IDP families are living in makeshift shelters, exposed to health and protection risks. Women and girls are exposed to protection risks due to very poor living conditions. Subsequently, families have settled also on private land without permission, risking possible eviction. Many of these displaced populations reside in informal settlements across the country, in which poverty, poor shelter conditions, and lowered hygiene standards are widespread. 'Winterisation' remains a major concern. Meeting IDPs shelter needs requires improving the timeliness of delivering provisional shelter, ensuring better linkage with transitional shelter (or permanent housing), and further focusing on hard-to-reach people.

**Urbanisation:** Afghanistan is undergoing a rapid urban transition. While the current share of its population living in cities is comparatively low (25.8% in 2014 compared to 32.6% across South Asia), Afghanistan's urbanisation rate is among the highest in the region. Its urban population is growing at 5% annually, more than twice the regional average. The country's urbanisation transition is impacted by Afghanistan's history of conflict and fragility, which presents additional challenges for urban areas. Cities are struggling to accommodate increasing numbers of persons seeking security, shelter, and jobs. The newcomers include internally displaced persons, returning refugees, as well as those leaving rural agricultural employment and seeking service-based jobs in urban areas. This migration will continue for a generation; by 2060, half of all Afghans will live in cities, which means that roughly 15 million people will be moving to cities in the next 40 years (World Bank).

IFRC operational plan will mostly focus on addressing shelter needs for IDPs and returnees in three provinces with a view to maximising timely winterisation shelter and NFI support for most vulnerable IDPs living in inadequate shelter in three provinces (Bamyan, Daykundi, and Nangharar) in areas where ARCS is among the few organisations to have access.
1. **Needs assessment:** Emergency needs assessment and beneficiary selection and registration are completed in hard-to-reach areas in three provinces.

2. **Shelter assistance:** About 34,000 IDPs and returning refugees (4,900 households) to receive safe and adequate shelter in hard-to-reach areas, including emergency shelter assistance kit and cash for rent.

3. **School safety:** As part of the comprehensive school safety programme, 80 schools are retrofitted or rehabilitated.

**2018:**

- Over 630,000 people were newly internally displaced in 2018.
- Out of the 16,400 existing schools in Afghanistan, nearly 90% of existing schools were built by the community using unskilled labour and inexperienced construction management. Retrofitting schools and existing buildings would reduce fatalities by 90%.
- Afghanistan’s high urban migration rate, driven by population growth, refugee returns, and migration from rural areas is leading to a rapid growth of cities, especially Kabul, whose population has tripled in the last seven years. This has put increasing pressure on already overstretched basic services, including housing, water, and sewage systems.

**Outcome**

**Communities in disaster- and crisis-affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, well-being, and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlements solutions**

- **People reached:** 34,000
- **Households assisted:** 4,900
AREA OF FOCUS
LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC NEEDS

Poverty: According to Afghanistan’s Central Statistics Organization (CSO), more than 54% of the population is living under the poverty line, increasing to 67% during the winter season in the country. Employment is no guarantee against poverty with 49.3% of those fully employed still falling below the poverty line. Women’s access to education, training, and labour market remains too low across the country. Displaced women suffer additional barriers to productive livelihoods, such as increased domestic tensions, domestic violence, forced marriage or early marriage. Over the past decade, women have paid a high price to the ongoing protracted crisis with a growing number of widows and single-headed households with no income. The war also resulted in the displacement of women who were left with the responsibility of caring for their families, without sources of income.

Women empowerment: The socioeconomic empowerment of women will be at the core of IFRC’s livelihood programming in Afghanistan in 2020. Occupational skills development (Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and apprenticeship) and business development support activities will be implemented to support vulnerable women to learn skills, operate their economic activities, and generate incomes. Community-based mobilisation, sensitisation, and awareness-raising (SGBV) activities will also be implemented, supporting the psychosocial reintegration of the target women. Implementation of these women empowerment activities will mainly focus in five marastoons of ARCS but will also be expanded to some other communities/villages that will be identified in close collaboration with ARCS.

Livelihood recovery supports to displaced population and their host communities: In 2020, IFRC through its livelihoods programming will also support the displaced population (IDPs and returnees) to recover and restore their livelihoods. Using a needs-based approach and the vulnerability criteria noted above, the livelihood recovery assistance will be provided to the most vulnerable among the displaced population. To mitigate conflict between the displaced people and their hosts, IFRC will work to foster social cohesion and re-inclusion in the social fabric of the communities. It is therefore that poor and vulnerable households from host communities will be part of IFRC’s livelihood recovery interventions. The specific type of activities (employability and employment) will be finalised when needs assessments and market analysis are done in target locations.
**Food security and basic needs:** In 2020, IFRC also intends to provide relief assistance to households affected by conflicts, drought, or flooding fostering their purchasing power and food security. IFRC will coordinate and harmonise its relief and emergency responses with existing in-country clusters and other coordination bodies such as Food Security and Agriculture Cluster, Cash and Voucher Working Group, WASH Cluster, and NFI & Shelter Cluster to ensure programmatic duplications are avoided and impacts are enhanced.

1. **Need assessments and market analysis** are carried out in 5 social welfare centres (marastoons), IDPs camps and hard to reach areas in 20 provinces.

2. **Capacity and skill training** are provided to targeted households in support of their livelihood recovery and restoration activities.

3. **Livelihoods package** is provided to vulnerable households with a focus on underprivileged women and displaced populations.

4. **Food assistance and multi-purpose cash** are provided to 15,000 households to meet their minimum expenditure basket needs.

2018:

- The first Afghanistan Multidimensional Poverty Index (A-MPI), shows that just over half (51.7%) of people in Afghanistan are multidimensionally poor.

- Poverty is mainly rural (58.3% of the population) but has doubled in urban areas since 2011 (to 41.6%).

- Majority of employment opportunities are in the agricultural sector, employing 75% of the population. However, agricultural growth has been constrained by unfavourable weather conditions and lack of investment.

**PEOPLE REACHED**

**100,000**

**WIDOWS AND UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN**

**880**

**OUTCOME**

COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY IN DISASTER- AND CRISIS- AFFECTED AREAS, RESTORE AND STRENGTHEN THEIR LIVELIHOODS
AREA OF FOCUS

HEALTH

Access to health: Estimates suggest that approximately 9 million people have limited or no access to essential healthcare services owing to insufficient coverage of nationally led health services and direct interruption of services due to the conflict. The need for access to lifesaving trauma care and mass casualty management is of growing concern. Maternal mortality (680/100,000 live births) and infant mortality (52/1,000 live birth) rates in Afghanistan are among the highest in the world (WHO, 2018).

Nutrition: The overall nutritional situation in Afghanistan remains critical with nutritional surveys showing global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence well above the emergency threshold at >15% in nine provinces and severe acute malnutrition affecting 20 provinces out of 34 across the country.

Communicable disease: Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the major public health issues in the country (67,000 in 2017, StopTB Partnership) associated with the risk of the development of drug-resistant TB. The number of polio cases has increased over the past years, although its transmission is restricted to the Southern and Eastern regions. Afghanistan is one of only three countries in the world with ongoing wild poliovirus transmission, alongside Nigeria and Pakistan. While the number of reported cases in Afghanistan has reduced from 21 in 2018 to 8 in 2019, efforts must continue to effectively eradicate polio.

Health and humanitarian assistance: An estimated 6.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance (UN Health cluster). Of those, 1.9 M people will need emergency health services due to conflict, natural disasters, and a lack of basic services.

Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is one of the most prominent health actors operating across the whole country, including in hard-to-reach communities, in line with its commitment to ‘working with people that no one else can reach.’ With a network of 45 clinics, 34 mobile clinics, and health teams, ARCS has the capacity to develop community-health interventions throughout Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, reaching more than 3 million people in 2018.

IFRC 2020 programme in health will continue supporting ARCS in strengthening its integrated community-based health programme through the delivery of basic package of health services that includes health promotion, first aid, training of volunteers as agents of health in communities, support to ARCS mobile health teams and contribution to reproductive health with a stronger link to nutrition.

On immunisation, IFRC will work with ARCS to strengthen polio eradication (3 critical districts) and routine immunisation (6 provinces) through strategic partnerships, under the priorities determined the Ministry of Public Health, with the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI), in close coordination other national and international key stakeholders involved in the priority area such as UNICEF, WHO, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
First aid and safety: IFRC will enhance support to ARCS in developing health prevention capabilities in vulnerable communities through the Community-based Health and First Aid Programme and by expanding the network of ARCS first aid trainers, enhancing awareness-raising, and promoting road safety.

1. Community-based health initiatives to reduce health risks are launched in at least two regions to reach 180,000 people.

2. Healthcare support: Training sessions for volunteers, grandmother committees and staff are carried out to enable health interventions and awareness-raising campaigns in communities.

3. Emergency health: 54,000 people are provided with clinical health services during emergencies.

4. Immunisation: 130,000 women and children are reached with immunisation and health services in hard-to-reach areas as a contribution to the goal set by the Ministry of Public Health to immunise 80% of the children in each province.

2018:

- 4.5 million people are faced with extreme access constraints to essential health services due to living in conflict-affected areas.
- Communicable diseases account for more than 60% of all outpatient visits and more than half of all deaths in Afghanistan (WHO).
- Non-communicable diseases (NCD) are the cause of more than 35% of mortality; heart diseases rank first among the main causes of death in the country, respiratory infection second and strokes fourth.
- Road accidents have become a critical public health issue as road injuries have become 6th main cause of death in 2017 (9th in 2007).
AREA OF FOCUS

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

According to the UNICEF and WHO joint monitoring report, only 55% of people in Afghanistan have access to safe drinking water. Divisions between rural and urban percentages persist with 78% in urban settings and 47% in rural settings. Safe hygiene practices rate is at 39%, and again showing signs of disparity with urban settings estimates at 66% compared with rural settings at 33%. According to the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) report, safe hygiene behaviours like handwashing with soap is practised by less than 30% people in 24 out of 34 provinces. The key protective measures from water-borne diseases, such as the use of toilets (stopping open defecation) and handwashing with soap at critical times are further compromised during emergencies due to lack of facilities and poor awareness among the affected population. Various HMIS reports from ARCS clinics and mobile health teams have confirmed that water-borne diseases like diarrhoea are very high among people especially children in Afghanistan.

Decades of conflict, natural disasters and weak governance have curbed investment in public infrastructures and made enforcing relevant sanitation and hygiene regulations difficult. The vulnerability of WASH infrastructures is often due to inferior quality construction and a lack of repair and maintenance. Nationally, over 35 per cent of improved water points are non-functional at any time. Afghanistan also has no functioning sewage and wastewater treatment systems, and existing septage management systems are informal.
IFRC WASH programme in 2020 will focus on supporting Afghan Red Crescent’s technical capacity to design and implement low-cost and durable sanitation solutions and ensure that WASH approaches are appropriately linked with community and school awareness activities. The WASH programme will be mostly implemented in schools, following a tripartite MoU with the Ministry of Public Health, and be articulated with the Community-based Health and First Aid Programme and reach in health prevention, nutrition, food security, and first aid services. It is also designed as a contribution to drastically reduce acute watery diseases and eliminate cholera through improved hygiene and sanitation services in at-risk communities.

1. WASH in school will target 70 schools and 20,000 students by establishing WASH management plans, raise awareness on safe personal hygiene and environmental practices.

2. Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD): Health and WASH conditions of a total of 150,000 people at risk to AWD will be improved in three most critical provinces/AWD ‘hotspots’ over a five-year period.

3. Need assessments and programme monitoring will be carried out through 20 KAP survey/baselines on access to safe water and sanitation services.

4. Community plans on WASH are developed for 30 communities

2018:

- Data indicates that separate sanitary toilet coverage in schools is at 46%, availability of safe drinking water in schools is at 48%, and hand-washing facilities is at 12%. (UNICEF)
- Diarrhoea still claims the lives of 9,500 children, or 26 each day, in Afghanistan (UNICEF)
- At least 1.5 million people will be in acute need of WASH assistance by 2020 (OCHA)
- Over 4 million people still practice open defecation and almost 50% of improved drinking water sources are contaminated with faecal matters (UNICEF)

OUTCOME

VULNERABLE PEOPLE HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLE WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE SERVICES

STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED WITH WASH SERVICES

56,000
AREA OF FOCUS

PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION

Gender equality: Afghanistan ranks 153 out of 160 countries for its Gender Inequality Index (2017): 27.4% of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 11.4% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 36.9% of their male counterparts. Female participation in the labour market is 19.5% compared to 86.7% for men.

Gender-based violence: Studies suggest that 87% of Afghan women experience at least one form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence, and 62% experience multiple forms (UNFPA).

Child protection: Armed conflict and insecurity, as well as natural disasters or displacements, increase the vulnerability of children. Affected children are exposed to risks such as child marriage, child labour, and child trafficking. Recent Protection Monitoring reports established that numerous communities rely on child marriage and child labour as a coping strategy.

In line with IFRC global strategy, Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) refers to all efforts by ARCS, IFRC, and Red Cross Red Crescent partners to ensure the dignity, access, participation, and safety of all individuals involved in our work. Consistent with this goal, ARCS has made a commitment to strengthen PGI (which includes child protection and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence) across all humanitarian action. ARCS is committed to the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action as well as IFRC Minimum Standard Commitments to Gender and Diversity in Emergency Programming.
In December 2015, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted the Resolution on Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV): Joint Action on Prevention and Response (32IC/15/R3), which outlines specific responsibilities for States, National Societies, IFRC, and the ICRC in prevention and response to SGBV, particularly in emergencies.

IFRC 2020 programme in Afghanistan will aim at strengthening capacity of ARCS to mainstream a gender-sensitive approach across all programmes, addressing SGBV issues and promoting protection, gender, and inclusion among volunteers and across ARCS humanitarian interventions.

1. Country-Wide operational research on SGBV in emergencies will enable to collect and analyse data on SGBV to contribute to better knowledge and appropriate strategies to tackle this major protection issue.

2. Advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives will be conducted to further protect the rights and dignity of women and children, with a focus on social welfare centres (marastoons) and across emergency responses.

3. ARCS staff and volunteers will be enabled to incorporate a gender perspective, minimum standards on gender and child protection policy in operations and programmes.

2018:

- Denial of resources, opportunities and services, emotional abuse, and forced marriage are among the most frequent types of GBV in Afghanistan.
- For every 100,000 live births, 396 women die from pregnancy-related causes; and the adolescent birth rate is 64.5 births per 1,000 women of ages 15–19.
- 493 women were killed during the first 6 months of 2018 (compared to 417 women during the same period in 2017).
- Afghan Government is to adopt in 2020 its first national Policy on the Protection of Women during War and Emergency Situations.

PEOPLE REACHED AND ENGAGED

OUTCOME

COMMUNITIES BECOME MORE PEACEFUL, SAFE, AND INCLUSIVE THROUGH MEETING THE NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

40,000
AREA OF FOCUS
MIGRATION

**Displacement:** Current displacement is driven by a mix of conflict, environmental, and economic issues (such as chronic poverty, reduced coping capacities, lack of investment in rural communities and agriculture. Since 2014, more than 4.2 million Afghans returned, both voluntarily and forcibly, from abroad to over 11,400 settlements across Afghanistan, increasing pressure on already limited infrastructure, social services and public structures. Only in first eight months of 2019, a total of 305,070 undocumented Afghans returned to Afghanistan from Iran (95 per cent or 290,881 persons) and Pakistan (5 per cent or 14,189 individuals).

**Protection crisis:** Afghans on the move face human rights violations, as well as many protection risks including abuse by smugglers and authorities, detention, and crime. Many returnees have specific vulnerabilities: unaccompanied minors (UAM), women-at-risk (including female-headed households and single females), medical cases (including high rates of traumatic injury from abuse, hazardous labour and car accidents), older persons-at-risk, persons with disabilities, persons with mental health or substance abuse, and victims of human rights abuse (IOM).

**Assistance:** Systematic and meaningful relief, recovery, and development assistance (livelihoods, WASH, protection, nutrition, and health) are required to support this displacement affected population reach levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers.
In line with Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principle as well as the Global Migration Compact, **IFRC 2020 programme on migration and displacement** will focus on supporting ARCS in addressing short-term humanitarian needs, while developing its capacity and strategy to engage on a medium and longer-term basis that also includes host communities. Engagement in migration and displacement will be carried out in collaboration with Afghan Central Civil Registration Authority, Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Movement partners and humanitarian agencies including IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and local partner agencies.

1. Need assessments will be carried out in at least 6 provinces, with a focus on hard-to-reach areas.

2. Humanitarian assistance will be provided with a focus immediate needs including food, shelter and health.

3. Social and psychosocial reintegration activities will be carried out in at least 3 targeted provinces, bolstered by specific training and capacity building for ARCS staff and volunteers.

4. Advocacy activities will be carried out to facilitate acceptance between communities, address discrimination and prevent violence.

2018:

- Over 630,000 people were internally displaced, both due to conflict and drought.
- As of 2017, there were an estimated 800,000 Afghans in European Union Member States, accounting for the largest group of asylum applicants to the EU with 170,860 applications pending approval as of end 2018.
- Among returning Afghans from Pakistan, 95 per cent are in family groups averaging between 7–10 members; over 75 per cent rely on daily wage labour as a livelihood, and 53 % have failed to complete even primary education (World Bank).

**OUTCOME**

COMMUNITIES SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND THOSE ASSISTING MIGRANTS AT ALL STAGES OF MIGRATION (ORIGIN, TRANSIT, AND DESTINATION)

**PEOPLE REACHED AND SUPPORTED**

170,000
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITIES

Following the recommendations of 2019 Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) report as well as the Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) report, coordinated support to Afghan Red Crescent development will focus on a set of interrelated interventions aiming at strengthening its institutional foundations and management systems, at Headquarters and local branch levels.

A comprehensive NSD strategy will be developed in 2020 to ensure a more integrated approach combining strengthened management systems—Human resources, youth and volunteer management, finance, audit, logistics, digital infrastructures, PMER, resource mobilisation and communication - and more effective support to ARCS programmes and services, including through branch enhancement and development and a comprehensive effort to strengthen Afghan Red Crescent’s organisational readiness to respond to disasters and crises, with a strong emphasis on CASH readiness and further localising ARCS supply chain.
Renewed efforts will be provided to support a **stronger legal basis** of Afghan Red Crescent, as an independent auxiliary to public authorities, and through its constitution. Coordinated efforts will also be provided to develop the new Afghan Red Crescent’s strategic plan 2021–2025 and to organise a country-wide General Assembly in 2020 representing its 7 regional branches and 35 provincial branches.

- 10,000 volunteers from Afghan Red Crescent are covered by insurance, with a priority on those operating in hard-to-reach areas
- 200 volunteers are trained in emergency response in local branches, and 100 volunteers champion sport as a driver of principled humanitarian action
- ARCS is implementing its youth policy and strategy and mainstreaming its gender policy.
- ARCS has established mechanisms and systems to deliver cash-based interventions
- ARCS has established a regional hub on women empowerment

**AFGHAN RED CRESCENT CAPACITY BUILDING AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES ARE FACILITATED TO ENSURE THAT THE NATIONAL SOCIETY HAS THE NECESSARY LEGAL, ETHICAL, AND FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS, SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES, COMPETENCIES AND CAPACITIES TO PLAN AND PERFORM.**

**AFGHAN RED CRESCENT’S PROGRAMMATIC AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES ARE Supported**

**AFGHAN RED CRESCENT TO DEVELOP A DEEPLY SHARED IDENTITY AND IMPROVED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ENSURE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The interventions will aim at strengthening and diversifying ARCS response tools at national, regional and local levels, in articulation with IFRC regional and global platforms and tools. It will include the prepositioning of equipment and emergency stocks located in disaster prone and crisis areas to support ARCS preparedness and responsiveness at national and local levels. Greater emphasis will also be put on developing vulnerability and needs assessment, contextual analysis, cash-based interventions as well as community engagement and accountability.

Effective Movement Coordination mechanisms will be strengthened through quarterly leadership meetings (ARCS, ICRC, IFRC) addressing strategic issues inside and outside the Movement, as well as Operational Coordination meetings gathering all Movement partners to share information, address potential programmatic and operational issues and facilitate synergies on thematic priorities. These mechanisms are included in the Movement Coordination Agreement (MCA) signed in 2018 to further define coordination and cooperation modalities between ARCS, ICRC, IFRC and in-country Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, including in terms of security, common positioning and standards.

OUTCOME

EFFECTIVE AND COORDINATED INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE IS ENSURED

OUTCOME

THE COMPLEMENTARITY AND STRENGTHS OF THE MOVEMENT ARE ENHANCED
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

INFLUENCE OTHERS AS LEADING STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Support ARCS strategic positioning from local implementing agency to equal partner and principled national actor with unparalleled access to and acceptance from communities in hard-to-reach areas and promote its contribution to principled humanitarian action across the country. This will go together with a stronger analysis on humanitarian issues as well as a stronger presence, influence and voice in decision-making processes. More active engagement from ARCS and IFRC with international actors in Afghanistan will be supported with a view to maximising collaboration and partnership opportunities. This will include ARCS participation to or convening role in humanitarian dialogues related to Afghanistan. A collaboration platform will also be sought at national and local levels to foster coalitions for community resilience, in line with the One Billion Coalition for Resilience. ARCS auxiliary role will be equally supported, including through advocacy bolstered by operational researches (SGBV and women empowerment, access and acceptance in hard-to-reach areas), structured cooperation with academics as well as key public institutions via formal agreements or coordinated programmes on disaster management, health, education/school safety, climate change and displacements. Finally, Afghanistan context will be further profiled through ARCS and RCRC partners contribution to key policy agendas with a focus on the SDGs, the Grand Bargain and localisation, the Global Compact on Migration, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and IFRC commitments to the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR).

OUTCOME

IFRC SECRETARIAT, TOGETHER WITH AFGHAN RED CRESCENT, USE THEIR UNIQUE POSITION TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS THAT AFFECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

OUTCOME

THE PROGRAMMATIC REACH OF AFGHAN RED CRESCENT AND IFRC IS EXPANDED
STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ENSURE A STRONG IFRC

In progressing the realisation of the objectives set for IFRC 2020 Operational Plan, the Country Office will aim at strengthening its technical support services and coordination capabilities which will require additional expertise in DRR/climate change, finance development, business development, partnership, research and humanitarian analysis. Guiding principles of agility, cost-effectiveness, results and accountability will prevail in managing resources and staff as a collective platform for RCRC partners in support of ARCS outreach and development.

- **Agility**: In a rapidly changing Afghanistan, the continuous focus will be put on security and safety, in close liaison with ICRC and ARCS security teams, with a view to adapting to evolving security risks and dynamics.

- **Cost-effectiveness**: The Country Office will streamline its costs in the pursuit of reducing the SOSC and further localise positions bolstered by a robust performance evaluation framework and monitoring. Results shall be tracked on a monthly basis and will include enhanced support to ARCS PMER and data/information management focal points.

- **Accountability** will remain a constant and overarching priority for improvement and will include effective risk management and compliance mechanisms to preventing fraud, corruption as well as sexual exploitation and abuse. This will entail renewed efforts to foster shared accountability with ARCS and partners for collective impact, including by optimising sharing of resources and capacities, joint and inclusive planning and reporting approaches with a view to promote collective impact and establish Afghanistan as a strategic and priority humanitarian context.

**OUTCOME**

IFRC ENHANCES ITS EFFECTIVENESS, CREDIBILITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

670,000 SWISS FRANCS
FUNDING REQUIREMENT
Contact information of the IFRC Country office, for partners who wish to find out more

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