



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

JOINT PROJECT

Community members in front of a solar-powered water supply network supported by STFA in Nangarhar Province. © UN-Habitat/Piroz Amin

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The UN organizations are listed in the order of joining STFA



Programme ¹ Title & Project Number		Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s)/ Strategic Results ²	
Programme Title: Durable Solutions Sectoral Joint Project (JP) MPTF Office Project Reference Number ³ : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 133760 • 133761 • 133762 • 133763 		Country: Afghanistan Region: Eastern Priority areas/Strategic Results: UNSFA Outcomes 1, 2, 3 Outcome 1: Sustained Essential Services Outcome 2: Economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods Outcome 3: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law	
Participating Organization(s)		Implementing Partners	
Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: 9 PUNOs 1. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2. International Labour Organization (ILO) 3. United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) 4. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 5. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 6. International Organization for Migration (IOM) 7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 8. United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT) 9. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN)		Please refer to PUNO-specific reports	
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)		Programme Duration	
Total approved budget as per project document:	12,525,000	Overall Duration	16 months
MPTF /JP Contribution ⁴ :	12,525,000		
Agency Contribution	N/A	Start Date ⁵	27 Aug 2024
Government Contribution)	N/A	Original End Date ⁶	31 Dec 2025
Other Contributions (donors):	N/A	Current End Date ⁷	31 Mar 2026
Total Contributions:	12,525,000		
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.		Report Submitted By	
Assessment/Review - if applicable please attach Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable please attach Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name: Peter Nordstrom • Title: Senior Trust Fund Manager • Participating Organization (Convening Agent): UNDP • Email address: peter.nordstrom@undp.org 	

[1] The term "programme" is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

[2] Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

[3] The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as "Project ID" on the project's factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[4] The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[5] The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[6] As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

[7] If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAP	Community action plan
EORE	Explosive ordnance risk education
FHH	Family health house
IDP	Internally displaced people
LIC	Local implementation committees
MPWC	Multi-purpose women's centre
MSMEs	Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises
OHAD	Organization for Humanitarian Assistance and Development
PSS	Psychosocial support services
PUNO	Participating United Nations organization
RMNCAH	Reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health
STFA	Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
UNSA	United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan



Executive Summary

Women take part in tailoring training in Nangarhar Province. © IOM/Mina Nazari



The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) Durable Solutions Sectoral Joint Project benefitted:



166,679⁸

including 118,706 women and girls in 2025

It provided targeted, displacement-sensitive interventions in areas of Mehtarlam District (Laghman Province) and Surkhrod District (Nangarhar Province) with significant numbers of returnees.

The project achieved notable gains in integrated, quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services through the sustained operation of 20 family health houses (FHHs). These provided critical entry points for the most vulnerable populations, including internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees and host communities in remote and underserved areas. They served 147,545 people in need (74% women and girls).

The establishment of multi-purpose women's centres (MPWCs) and targeted livelihood and income generation initiatives supported women's empowerment, including through an innovative apprenticeship programme. Initiatives to restore agricultural livelihoods and food security prioritized area-based, market-responsive interventions in high-return areas. They focused on women-headed households and other vulnerable groups to support sustainable reintegration and resilience.

The project strengthened local capacities to deliver entrepreneurship and workplace improvement services, supporting micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and aspiring entrepreneurs to improve business performance and working conditions. A training-of-trainers approach established a decentralized pool of qualified trainers to deliver standardized services at the local level. Women comprised a substantial share of trained trainers, contributing to a more gender-balanced training ecosystem and strengthening the foundation for inclusive entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure projects advanced significantly, providing safe water, protection from natural hazards and better access to markets and services, among other gains, while also supporting livelihoods through cash-for-work modalities. The clearance of explosive ordnance enabled the safe delivery of all forms of humanitarian assistance and reduced casualties to zero in the Mehtarlam and Surkhrod districts.

To build social cohesion, the project established 20 additional local implementing committees (LICs) and supported the development of 40 community action plans (CAPs).

[8] Beneficiary numbers are generally fluid and are subject to change following routine data verification and validation exercises that are conducted through the three layers of monitoring (PUNO – TFMU – TPMA).

The STFA Durable Solutions Sectoral Joint Project responds to the Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan initiated by the Government of Pakistan in November 2023. It triggered the mass deportation of predominantly undocumented Afghans, many penalized for lacking documentation. By January 2025, over 800,000 Afghans had returned to Afghanistan, placing immense pressure on host communities already facing severe economic hardship and high unemployment. Women, who constituted more than half of returnees, encountered heightened vulnerabilities, including economic disempowerment and threats to their rights and agency.

A coordinated, multisectoral response by international and local actors was critical to mitigate socioeconomic impacts and support sustainable reintegration. Accordingly, the project adopted a community-centred, area-based approach that considers the needs of both returnees and over 106,000 IDPs in affected districts. This approach emphasizes:

- Strengthening essential services and access to resources
- Supporting resilient livelihoods and inclusive local markets
- Promoting social cohesion and local governance
- Addressing gendered disempowerment and inequality

The project was approved in June 2024. It is implemented by nine participating United Nations organizations (PUNOs): ILO, IOM, FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNMAS, UN Women and UN-Habitat. It aligns with the United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA) and is embedded in broader STFA programming in the Eastern Region, enhancing existing efforts. Joint UN analysis guides the project, supporting targeted, displacement-sensitive interventions in high-return areas and greater acceptance of returnees by host communities.

The project initially focused on Mehtarlam District (Laghman Province) and Surkhrod District (Nangarhar Province), where PUNOs have a long-standing operational presence. These areas have a significant influx of returnees and urgently need to preserve past development gains while scaling up support to strained public services, livelihoods and market systems. All project results areas mainstream the empowerment of women and girls, addressing the gendered impacts of return through three core strategies:

- Ensuring local infrastructure and services respond to women's specific needs
- Prioritizing women's economic empowerment in livelihoods programming
- Promoting women's participation in community decision-making and conflict prevention through context-sensitive methods

The project places women and girls at the centre of its durable solutions strategy. Interventions include integrating women into local value chains, improving access to financial services and elevating women into leadership roles at the household and community levels. The project also fosters cordial relations among displaced, returnee and host women to enhance solidarity and shared resilience. By embedding a strong gender lens, the project not only responds to urgent reintegration needs but also lays the foundation for more equitable, inclusive recovery and development.



Provision of shelter and legal support programme for returnees and vulnerable families
in Afghanistan

په افغانستان کې دراستنیدونکو اوزیانمنو کورنیو لپاره ددایمی سرپناه جوړولو او حقوقي حمایت وړاندې کولو
پروگرام

برنامه فراهم سازی سرپناه و حمایت حقوقی برای عودت کنندگان و خانواده های آسیب پذیر در افغانستان

Funded by:



Implemented by:



NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

Results

A signpost of shelter constructed with STFA support in
Laghman Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal

Outcome

The STFA Durable Solutions Sectoral Joint Project in 2025 benefitted 166,679^[9] people, including 118,706 women and girls. It provided targeted, displacement-sensitive interventions in areas of Mehtarlam District (Laghman Province) and Surkhrod District (Nangarhar Province) with significant numbers of returnees. Towards providing durable solutions, the project improved the quality of healthcare, restored livelihoods, and rehabilitated and constructed infrastructure.

The procurement and distribution of essential maternal and reproductive health medicines addressed one of the most critical bottlenecks to quality healthcare, supporting the uninterrupted delivery of antenatal, delivery, postnatal and newborn care services across all FHHs. Higher service uptake than initially calculated resulted from a culturally sensitive, women-led care model and integrated package of health, nutrition, community outreach and psychosocial support services (PSS). Training for midwives from IDP, returnee and host communities and their employment in FHHs improved service availability and quality, provided livelihoods and expanded the health workforce.

Women's empowerment grew following the introduction of MPWCs as platforms for protection and well-being. Women gained agency at the centres through a range of services and information, a safe space to strengthen social networks and reduce isolation, and opportunities for vocational training complemented by numeracy and literacy training.

A variety of approaches to improve economic prospects and agency included an apprenticeship programme for women returnees, which strengthened technical competence, workplace readiness and market understanding, enabling participants to transition toward sustainable income activities. This also helped promote social cohesion between women returnees and host community mentors. A pool of trained trainers formed the foundation for cascading entrepreneurship support to MSMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs, enabling locally based trainers to continue to deliver quality entrepreneurship training and increasing women's economic participation.

Area-based, market-responsive agricultural interventions targeted women-headed households and other vulnerable groups and supported sustainable reintegration and resilience. They improved household food availability, diversified income sources, enhanced resilience and reduced dependency on humanitarian assistance. Greater community resilience also grew from measures that included planting trees and constructing protective walls. These steps increased community safety and safeguarded environmental resources by mitigating threats from floods and other environmental hazards. In tandem, the clearance of explosive ordnance enabled the safe delivery of all forms of humanitarian assistance and reduced casualties to zero in the Mehtarlam and Surkhrod districts.

Social inclusion increased through LICs, which strengthened local governance and community resilience by empowering community members to take ownership of their development. Inclusion also advanced through a deliberate effort to build the capacities of a women-led civil society organization, which was involved in delivering livelihood activities for women. New skills in financial management, procurement, documentation and administration resulted in a stronger, more accountable organization. This improved its readiness to independently manage future women-focused livelihood projects.

[9] Beneficiary numbers are generally fluid and are subject to change following routine data verification and validation exercises that are conducted through the three layers of monitoring (PUNO – TFMU – TPMA).



Output-level Results

UNSCFA Priority Area 1: Sustained Essential Services

Output

1



Essential services and community infrastructure – including for health, agriculture, education, and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.

Output 1 benefitted

Number of Beneficiaries

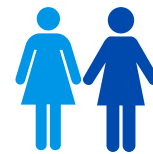
153,042



762

Number of Women and Girls

111,552



women and 190 children were reached through the establishment and operationalization of five MPWCs. Managed by two local women-led partner organizations in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces, the centres serve as vital hubs to deliver lifesaving, multisectoral services and information. To ensure that childcare was not a barrier to participation, the partners integrated child-friendly “corners” into the centre model, providing a safe and engaging environment for children while their mothers access critical programming.

112

women and girls at the MPWCs accessed individual and group-based PSS to build emotional resilience. Targeted awareness-raising sessions on gender-based violence prevention and protection reached 100 women and girls. To maintain the safety and technical quality of these interventions, staff were trained on survivor-centred and integrated PSS and gender-based violence response methodologies.

550

women at the MPWCs engaged in foundational vocational training on food processing, poultry, livestock and tailoring, equipping them with skills to initiate household-based livelihoods. Some 150 women also participated in foundational literacy and numeracy training, developing skills to enhance their agency.



160

people (80 from Laghman Province and 80 from Nangarhar Province, including 80 women, 50.0%) were enrolled in eight training centres (four in each province) and successfully completed a four-month technical and vocational education training programme, enhancing employability and supporting sustainable livelihood opportunities.

7

infrastructure works in Kunar, Nangarhar and Laghman provinces, including water management interventions, is currently under implementation (13 – 80% complete). These initiatives are expected to deliver significant improvements in water access, irrigation, flood protection and connectivity for targeted communities. Full results will be presented upon completion in the next reporting cycle.

20

FHHs in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces are fully operational and delivering services. Two FHHs in Nangarhar are in the final stages of construction. The procurement and distribution of essential maternal and reproductive health medicines were completed for all 20 FHHs, based on international standards. Referral pathways between FHHs and higher-level facilities were further strengthened through targeted capacity-building. Two provincial and two district hospitals now serve as designated referral points for the 20 FHHs, ensuring women in underserved, hard-to-reach communities have access to timely and life-saving care.

147,545

beneficiaries (74% women and girls) were reached through integrated health, nutrition, community outreach and PSS services, exceeding the initial target (40,000) by 269 per cent. This overachievement was driven by the adoption of a culturally sensitive, women-led care model and integrated package of services, fostering community trust and encouraging higher service uptake than initially calculated.

60,727

beneficiaries received essential RMNCAH services at the FHHs. Some 38,821 outpatient consultations were provided to children under age 5; 1,939 women received their first antenatal care visit, supporting early risk identification and birth preparedness; 644 women completed their fourth antenatal care visit, demonstrating improved retention and health-seeking behaviour. Postnatal care services reached 990 women for a first visit and 923 women for a third visit, supporting the early detection of post-partum complications and newborn health monitoring.

27,098

beneficiaries were reached by community health workers at health posts.



828

deliveries were conducted by skilled birth attendants within FHHs, improving maternal and neonatal outcomes. Newly trained midwives received practical training on danger identification, referral documentation and coordination with referral hospitals. During 2025, 82 complicated maternal cases were referred to life-saving emergency obstetric and newborn care facilities; 90 complicated maternal and child health cases were referred through UNFPA-supported ambulances. Four obstetric fistula cases were identified and referred for specialized care, reflecting strengthened community-based surveillance and referral mechanisms.

7,916

beneficiaries received family planning counselling, resulting in 2,061 women and girls adopting modern family planning methods, supporting informed reproductive choices and healthier birth spacing. In addition, 4,509 women and children benefitted from basic maternal, infant and young child nutrition services. As a result, 27 malnourished children were identified and referred to therapeutic feeding units, preventing further health complications. Both family planning and nutrition services were integrated into routine service delivery.

886

individuals were engaged through family health action group health promotion and awareness sessions, strengthening community awareness and referral linkages.

58

households (with 563 individuals, including 298 women and girls, 52.9%) gained permanent shelters in 2025. The shelters consist of two rooms, one kitchen, a corridor and a standalone latrine. All beneficiary families were further provided with a Bukhari stove and access to potable water and solar energy. Beneficiary households were selected based on vulnerability and needs criteria. They included refugees and persons in refugee-like situations and returnees from Pakistan.

Shelter assistance was delivered through a cash modality, providing beneficiaries with a set amount to cover the costs of materials and daily labour. The cash modality was preceded by market assessments confirming the availability of materials in local markets. Throughout the construction process, technical monitoring and oversight helped beneficiary households uphold quality and safety standards.

3,629,415

square metres of land were cleared of mines and explosive ordnance, with 1,673 items destroyed by clearance teams. Survey teams checked 137 communities, responded to four community requests and destroyed five explosive devices.



8,085

people (3,880 women and girls, 48.0%) received explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). EORE teams distributed 4,403 brochures and 219 hotline cards, 876 pens and 1,475 notebooks to community members.

74

humanitarian workers (17 women, 22.0%) attended seven sessions of explosive ordnance safety awareness, enabling the safe delivery of STFA activities. Knowledge of explosive ordnance increased from 8.6 per cent in the pre-evaluation to 91.4 per cent in the post-evaluation. Some 306 EORE materials (76 notebooks, 74 pens, 82 hotline cards and 74 brochures) were distributed to other STFA partners.

0

civilian casualties from explosive ordnance were recorded in the Mehtarlam and Surkhrod districts in 2025, compared to three in 2024, a 100 per cent reduction.



A midwife talks about family planning with a patient in Kunar Province. © UNFPA

UNSFA Priority Area 2: Economic Opportunities and Resilient Livelihoods

Output

2



Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability.

Output 2 benefitted

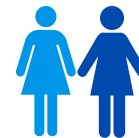
Number of Beneficiaries

1,262



Number of Women

982



500

returnee women (directly and 3,500 individuals indirectly through their households) in Surkhrod and Mehtarlam districts were rapidly assessed to identify areas of support for income-generation and market opportunities. Rapid needs assessments involved 816 respondents.

340

women completed vocational training in poultry (240) and tailoring (100) after a training-of-trainers for six trainers (all women). Training included theory and practical learning with pre- and post-assessments. All participants received sector-specific toolkits valued at \$200, enabling immediate application. Poultry participants were provided with 29 laying hens along with feed and drinker/feeder sets, while tailoring participants were given sewing machines, tools and materials. Post-training, participants reported daily income of AFN 150–300 (approximately US\$ 1.71 - 3.41), indicating immediate economic gains and increased household resilience.

60

participants (30 per district), based on the rapid needs assessment, were placed in two-month apprenticeships with 16 mentors/business centres. Sectors included tailoring and handicrafts. Each mentee received a \$100 toolkit and \$175 cash support for transport. Mentors received \$25 per mentee.



100

participants (50 per district) received business management training and developed business plans. Among them, 66 participants chose poultry and 34 tailoring, reflecting market demand. Each participant received \$8 per day in transportation support and in-kind support valued at \$200 (poultry kits or tailoring start-up kits, including sewing machines and equipment).

Integrated, market-responsive agriculture and livestock livelihood packages aimed at restoring productive capacities and supporting sustainable income generation for vulnerable households affected by displacement and return. Results included:

- 1,790 households reached (64% of the target of 2,790 households), benefiting 13,817 people, including 7,104 women and girls (51.4%).
- 1,494 women-headed households (83% of the total) reached
- Greenhouse packages provided to 40 households (337 people, 170 women), including 36 women-headed households
- Soybean cultivation packages provided to 200 households (1,792 people, 869 women), including six women-headed households
- Dairy kits provided to 500 households (4,337 people, 2 224 women and girls), including 407 women-headed households
- Semi-commercial poultry packages to 1,000 households (6,969 people, 3,663 women and girls), including 995 women-headed households
- Beekeeping packages to 50 women-headed households (382 people, 178 women and girls)
- Establishment of 50 common interest groups and producer groups covering 920 households, including 452 women-headed households, to support collective production, value-chain engagement and sustainability

134

trainers in Laghman and Nangarhar provinces were trained on key entrepreneurship and decent work issues, including starting and improving a business (51 trainers: 24 women, 47.1%), gender and entrepreneurship (19 women), financial education (20 trainers: 12 women, 60.0%), and business coaching and mentorship (21 trainers: 13 women, 61.9%).

23

trainers (10 women, 43.5%) were capacitated on occupational safety and health, elimination of child labour, and non-discrimination in employment and occupation, in line with the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

60

women-led MSMEs received training on the ILO Cooperative Business Model, while a four-day training on business digitalization was delivered to 80 women-led MSMEs to strengthen market access and expand customer reach.



123

aspiring entrepreneurs (48 women, 39.0%) were trained on starting a business and 117 MSMEs (62 women-led, 53.0%) on improving a business. Gender and entrepreneurship training reached 184 beneficiaries (33 women-led MSMEs and 151 aspiring entrepreneurs). Financial education was provided to 220 MSMEs (100 women-led, 45.5%), enhancing business planning, financial management and market engagement skills. To translate knowledge into practice, business coaching and mentorship were provided to 79 MSMEs (46 women-led, 58.2%). Coaches conducted three on-site sessions per enterprise, delivering tailored advisory services and enabling beneficiaries to apply new skills, improve operations and increase sales.

119

MSMEs (59 women-led, 49.6%) were trained on emergency first aid; in tandem, first aid kits were distributed. Some 110 MSMEs (60 women-led, 54.5%) received training on non-discrimination in employment and occupation.

112

MSMEs (including 56 women beneficiaries, 50.0%) received cash grants (24) and toolkits (88). All 112 completed a 10-day capacity-building training programme to strengthen their technical and business skills.

20

unemployed midwives (15 in Nangarhar Province and 5 in Laghman Province) from IDP, returnee and host communities preserved and enhanced clinical skills through a structured three-month pre-service training programme designed to prepare them for integrated service delivery in underserved settings. Following successful completion of the course, all midwives were placed as second midwives within FHHs.



Poultry provided to a family through STFA support is being fed in Nangarhar Province. © FAO/Hasim Azizi



Output

3



Communities have improved infrastructure, access to water and preparedness mechanisms to protect farm-based livelihoods and cope with climate and environment shocks and natural disasters.

30,000

trees were planted across 18 hectares to naturally mitigate flood impacts, with expected benefits for approximately 24,000 people.

250

households (1,750 individuals, including 856 women and girls, 48.9%) were protected from potential floods and landslides by the 450-metre Shamatai Akhond Abad Boulder Wall.

300

households (2,100 individuals, including 1,029 women and girls, 49.0%) were protected by the 805-metre Sayaf Family Protection Wall.



A flood protection wall in Nangarhar Province. © UN-Habitat/Nawidullah Qaderi



UNSFA Priority Area 3: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights and Rule of Law

Output

4



Social cohesion, respect for human rights – including, in particular, the rights of women and girls and access to justice are progressively strengthened at the local level – contributing to greater community resilience.

Output 4 benefitted

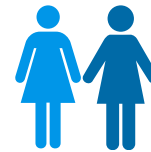
Number of Beneficiaries

5,355



Number of Women

2,784



20

community mobilization activities in Mehtarlam resulted in 21 boundaries being mapped and 20 LICs being established. The LICs comprised 30 members each (15 women, 50.0%). The total number of LICs in Nangahar and Laghman provinces is now 40.

1,200

LIC members (600 women, 50.0%) attended training on governance, planning, leadership, financial literacy and budget management and monitoring, conflict resolution, gender-based violence, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and community development, with a focus on developing and implementing community action plans.

5,355

people (2,784 women, 52.0%) were reached through community mobilization around the LICs.

40

CAPs were developed by LICs, based on five participatory, vulnerability and capacity analyses, and five hazard, strategic and land use maps.





Delays in Implementation, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Best Practices

Session of the Local Implementation Committee (LIC) in Laghman Province for an STFA-supported initiative. © UN-Habitat/Piroz Amin



Challenges

1

The prolonged finalization of a memorandum of understanding with the *de facto* Ministry of Public Health temporarily affected midwife recruitment and FHH operationalization. Logistical and administrative clearances for supplies also posed challenges within an evolving governance environment. These concerns were addressed through strong technical coordination and engagement with the *de facto* ministry. They required a no-cost extension to the first quarter of 2026 to complete planned activities.

2

Restrictions on women continued to create difficulties. Reaching women entrepreneurs was particularly sensitive and required discretion, smaller group sizes, adjusted schedules, and arrangements for mahrams to ensure safe and acceptable participation.

3

The shutdown of Internet and mobile networks in September 2025 significantly affected project implementation, coordination and reporting between field teams and provincial offices. Temporary measures enabled the continuation of essential operations until the situation returned to normal.

4

Community dynamics presented challenges during site prioritization, where local preferences occasionally conflicted with technical criteria. These constraints were addressed through structured dialogue, transparent communication and community sensitization, reinforcing trust and acceptance.

5

Ongoing economic instability, characterized by currency fluctuations, inflation and reduced economic activity, negatively impacted purchasing power and operational efficiency. At the same time, recurrent natural hazards, including floods and earthquakes, led to population displacement, heightened humanitarian needs, and increased risks to infrastructure and livelihood interventions. Adaptive planning, continuous risk monitoring and close coordination with stakeholders supported the continuity of activities.

Lessons Learned

1

Deploying trained female health workers from within affected communities significantly improves service uptake, trust and long-term sustainability.

2

Starting training-of-trainers activities at an early stage helped maintain project momentum despite operational constraints. Further, the women's mentorship programme is a good practice that could be promoted, both for the transfer of skills to women returnees and improvements in social cohesion. As returnee women interacted with host community women, they shared stories and built trust and empathy. Over a longer period, to achieve sustained impacts, women could be supported in forming groups, adding value to their products, and upscaling and diversifying their businesses.



Risk Analysis

In 2025, the Durable Solutions Sectoral Joint Project was implemented under a robust risk management framework established during project planning. Key risks continued to materialize, particularly restrictions on women and girls' participation in social and economic life, including prohibitions on working with national and international non-governmental organizations and limited access to UN compounds.

PUNOs applied a strategic, principled approach to mitigate these risks. Measures included high-level advocacy with *de facto* authorities and the international community, engagement with local leaders to promote inclusive programme delivery, and adaptive modalities such as relocating women-focused activities and enabling remote work for female staff. These actions ensured continued access to women beneficiaries, safeguarded personnel and maintained operational continuity.

Risk management strategies remain in place as the project progresses into 2026, providing a foundation for adaptive, context-sensitive approaches to sustain inclusive delivery and safeguard project outcomes.

Qualitative Assessment

Collectively, the project's integrated approach, combining coordination, infrastructure development, livelihood support and capacity-building, improved access to services, strengthened community resilience and enhanced socioeconomic stability, laying a solid foundation for durable solutions in displacement- and climate-affected areas.

Amid increased restrictions and the scrutiny of women-led organizations and women's movement outside the home, the project successfully adapted its delivery model for the MPWCs by shifting from two large, high-visibility community centres to five smaller, decentralized hubs. This strategic pivot minimized visibility and mitigated protection risks while ensuring service continuity. A high level of community buy-in, however, resulted in demand for services that consistently exceeded centre capacity, highlighting the profound need for continued and expanded support.

The project demonstrated a resilient, community-anchored approach to delivering essential health services while empowering women and supporting long-term recovery for IDPs, returnees and host communities. It made substantial progress in restoring essential RMNCAH services while simultaneously supporting livelihoods for women affected by displacement through the deployment of trained midwives. The integration of health, nutrition, community outreach and PSS within a single service platform has proven to be an effective and scalable model for displacement-affected settings.

Extensive interaction with community elders, local authorities and community women helped the mentorship intervention for women gain quick acceptance. The continuation of an existing partnership with an international non-governmental organization, BRAC, which had already gained considerable trust, allowed immediate implementation. At the same time, the project supported a local partner, OHAD, in developing capacities to continue the work in the future. A "women for women" approach contributed to the resilience and self-reliance of vulnerable returnee women and their economic integration in areas of return.



The project laid a sustainable foundation for entrepreneurship development and workplace improvement. A two-tier approach of first developing a pool of local trainers and then cascading services to entrepreneurs has proven effective in ensuring the scale, continuity and local ownership of results. Mainstreaming decent work and the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work – particularly occupational safety and health and non-discrimination – alongside business development interventions supported enterprise growth alongside improved workplace practices.

Livelihoods and human capital development interventions further reinforced socioeconomic recovery and social inclusion. Support to MSMEs through cash grants, in-kind assistance and capacity-building enhanced business continuity and resilience, with notable participation by women entrepreneurs. Technical and vocational education and training programmes improved employability and practical skills for youth and vulnerable populations, contributing to sustainable livelihoods beyond short-term employment opportunities.

Monitoring of the construction of natural-disaster resilient shelters under a cash-based intervention modality found that the majority of beneficiary-led constructions met approved technical standards and achieved the intended level of disaster resilience. Further, three installment-based payments supported timely implementation while maintaining construction quality. Overall, community feedback indicated high satisfaction with the cash-based intervention modality, highlighting improved ownership, flexibility and dignity, while ensuring the provision of safe, private and resilient shelter solutions.

The shelter initiative also encountered some manageable challenges, including minor variations in workmanship related to differing levels of skilled and unskilled labour, market price fluctuations, beneficiary capacity constraints, and beneficiary-led design adjustments reflecting ownership considerations as well as occasional minor deviations from technical specifications. These issues were effectively addressed through enhanced technical guidance, on-site support and corrective interventions by the technical monitoring partner, and the conditional release of subsequent installments based on the verification of construction milestones.

Tangible and visible results across infrastructure and service delivery interventions progressed smoothly following effective community mobilization, site preparation and stakeholder engagement, fostering sustainability and local ownership. Road, bridge, canal and flood protection wall projects at various stages of completion have significantly improved mobility, access to markets and essential services, and overall community connectivity. Flood protection, canal rehabilitation and afforestation initiatives addressed climate- and disaster-related risks by integrating short-term livelihood support with long-term environmental resilience measures. Active community engagement throughout the implementation cycle strengthened acceptance, ownership and the sustainability of outcomes.

Third-Party Monitoring findings reinforce the effectiveness of the initiative's integrated and area-based approach in delivering durable solutions across displacement- and climate-affected communities. Evidence from 2025 indicates that interventions combining infrastructure, livelihoods, essential services, and participatory mechanisms generated mutually reinforcing outcomes that strengthened resilience, improved socioeconomic stability, and enhanced local ownership. Beneficiaries consistently identified the relevance of these combined interventions in addressing both immediate needs and longer-term recovery priorities.



TPM observations further highlight that community-based implementation models and localized delivery mechanisms were central to programme success, particularly in restrictive and rapidly evolving contexts. Smaller, decentralized service platforms, strong engagement with informal community structures, and adaptive implementation strategies enabled continuity while preserving trust and accessibility. These approaches proved especially important for sustaining women's participation and reaching vulnerable populations under heightened operational constraints.

Monitoring also underscores the importance of sustainability planning, technical consistency, and post-support systems in preserving programme gains. Durable outcomes were strongest where interventions embedded local capacity-building, operation and maintenance arrangements, and pathways for continued economic growth beyond initial assistance. These findings reaffirm that integrated programming, when paired with adaptive delivery and strong community ownership, provides a viable model for long-term resilience and durable solutions.

Partnerships

The project demonstrates the benefits of delivering as one, whereby multiple organizations work together in a complementary and synergistic manner, capitalizing on each entity's areas of expertise and comparative advantages. Such collaborations bring greater value to end-users on a larger scale, delivering higher programmatic returns on investments compared to stand-alone interventions. Ultimately, they contribute to:

- Greater quality in programmatic interventions (i.e., tapping more effectively into the advantages of the greater division of labour)
- Greater cost-effectiveness in the use of limited programmatic resources (reducing unnecessary overlaps or duplications)
- Improved knowledge generation and dissemination

1

Such benefits, in turn, contribute to:

- Improved coverage (outreach to end users/end-beneficiaries) and greater socioeconomic impact (i.e., higher returns on programmatic investments)
- Greater sustainability
- Improved advocacy (i.e., helping to communicate more effectively, and with one voice, with other stakeholders)

UN coordination played a critical role in supporting project results in 2025. Regular coordination among PUNOs facilitated complementary interventions, reduced duplication and enabled sequencing across livelihoods, entrepreneurship and resilience-building efforts. While differences in operational timelines initially affected implementation, continued coordination and adaptive planning helped align activities over time and maintain momentum.

2

For example, UN-Habitat and IOM conducted initial ground assessments. Based on these assessments, UN-Habitat established LICs,



while IOM developed CAPs and shared the lists of LICs and CAPs with other PUNOs to enhance coordination for complementarity. Building on assessments conducted by UN-Habitat and IOM, UNHCR provided shelter assistance to vulnerable households. In parallel, FAO supported the same communities and households with backyard poultry farming packages, specifically targeting those without access to agricultural land and therefore unable to benefit from other agricultural support packages.

ILO collaboration with UNDP and UN Women also enabled coordinated beneficiary targeting and alignment with broader durable solutions objectives, while cooperation with FAO, IOM and provincial chambers expanded outreach and ensured relevance to local economic priorities. These partnerships allowed the ILO to focus on its technical mandate in entrepreneurship development and workplace improvement while leveraging partners' field presence and community networks. Engagement with provincial chambers also strengthened linkages between MSMEs and local markets, contributing to the sustainability of results.

Through the coordination and oversight of the Durable Solutions Working Group, UNDP enhanced alignment among participating agencies, improved coherence of interventions and ensured consistency with collectively agreed priorities. Regular coordination meetings, joint monitoring missions and systematic information sharing promoted operational synergies, minimized duplication and reinforced accountability across partners. This structured coordination mechanism supported evidence-based decision-making, enabled the early identification and resolution of implementation challenges, and contributed to more efficient use of resources and stronger collective impact.

3

4



A shelter built for a returnee with STFA support in Laghman Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal





Annexes

An STFA female beneficiary receives a beekeeping package after completing her vocational training in Nangarhar Province. © FAO



Annex I. Indicator-based Performance Tracker

(The figures in brackets are female figures.)

Annex I - Indicator-based Performance Review	Unit	Baseline	Target	Progress	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
Output 1. Essential services and community infrastructure - including for health, agriculture and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.						
1a. Number of people that have benefited from UN-supported essential services and/or new/rehabilitated infrastructure, disaggregated by type of service and sex.	Households	0	58	58 (8)		PUNO report
	People	1,000	61,300 (50,700)	152,882 (111,472)		PUNO report
1d. Number of functional, UN-supported, facilities providing basic health assistance (including basic health assistance services for women and girls)	Facilities/Infrastructure	40		40		PUNO report
1f. Number of children, adolescents and adults (including adolescent girls and women) who benefit from primary and secondary education, basic general literacy and vocational education programmes (at least 50% female)	People	0	160	160 (80)		PUNO report
Output 2. Livelihoods, businesses and local economy are able to recover and are more resilient to instability						
2b. Number of people who have benefited from newly-created income-generation opportunities, disaggregated by sex, age and province	Households	0	2,700 (1,300)	1,790 (1,494)		PUNO report
	People	0	1,020 (900)	533 (363)		PUNO report
2c. No. of worker-days generated with UN-support	Work days	0	130,000	624		PUNO report
2d. % of people with disabilities (PWD) that have benefited from newly-created income-generation opportunities	MSMEs	0		17 (17)		PUNO report
2e. % of newly-employed people that have benefited from Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures	People	0		229 (119)		PUNO report
2f. Number of MSMEs that benefit through financial capital support, training and/or other forms of asset support, disaggregated by women-led and men-led MSMEs	MSMEs	0	100 (0)	482 (293)		PUNO report
	People	0	400 (400)	500 (500)		PUNO report
Output 4. Social cohesion, human rights, access to justice are strengthened at local level.						
4a. Number of CBOs/CSOs with improved capacity for participatory and inclusive community planning (at least 20% women-led)	CSOs	0		9 (0)		PUNO report
	Other	0	10	31		PUNO report
4b. Number of people with better awareness about human rights, social cohesion and conflict prevention (at least 50% women)	People	0	12,000 (5,892)	5,355 (2,784)		PUNO report

Annex II. Stories from the Field

From Local Shop to Online Sales: Amina's Story



Amina with her team sewing clothes in Nangarhar Province. © ILO

In Nangarhar Province, 20-year-old Amina helps run her family's tailoring and handicraft business in Behsod District. The business relied on local customers. Amina had no online presence and limited outreach, and used manual recordkeeping. She lacked the skills to reach wider markets.

She later joined two training activities supported by the project. Start and Improve Your Business and Digitalize Your Business sessions provided basic business management and digital skills.

Using these skills, Amina moved her business online. She began promoting products on social media, taking digital orders and organizing deliveries. Sales increased by up to 40 percent.

Recordkeeping improved, and family members now support the business in more structured roles.

The experience strengthened Amina's confidence. She plans to expand the business, hire additional staff and share her skills with other women.

"Coming from a challenging background, I realized girls can rise too," she said. "With digital tools, we can build businesses, earn income, and support our families."



Strengthening a Small Business through Financial Skills



Maihan in his tailoring shop in Laghman Province. ©ILO/Fahim Mohammadi

Age 25, Maihan Oryakhil runs a tailoring shop in Mehtarlam City, in Laghman Province. The business employs four workers and serves local customers. He had no system to track income and expenses, however. Personal and business finances were mixed, savings were limited and unexpected costs disrupted operations.

Maihan was selected to participate in financial education training for MSMEs. He learned about budgeting, recordkeeping, savings, and separating business and personal finances. After the training, he introduced monthly budgets, began recording daily transactions and set aside regular savings. This helped him manage costs, maintain production and pay workers on time.

His income increased by about 35 percent, and the business became more stable. It continues to provide jobs and support his household. “Before the training, I worked hard but did not plan my money,” he said. “Now my business is more stable, and I feel more secure about the future.”

The training also improved his confidence and decision-making. He plans to expand his services, invest in equipment and share his knowledge with other entrepreneurs.





DELIVERING AS

 ONE

The word 'ONE' is rendered in a very large, bold, white sans-serif font. To its left is a circular graphic representing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each of the 17 segments of the circle is a different color, corresponding to the colors used in the official SDG logo.

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