



ISLAMIC RELIEF IN **AFGHANISTAN**

**SUPPORTING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES
THROUGH DECADES OF ADVERSITY**

ISLAMIC RELIEF IN AFGHANISTAN

Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired humanitarian and development agency working to save and transform the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Established in the UK in 1984, we work in over 40 countries, assisting people according to need and do not discriminate in any way.

Islamic Relief began supporting the people of Afghanistan in 1992, working with local partners to run Ramadan and qurbani food distributions. In the years since, we have expanded to work across 15 provinces, responding to numerous major disasters and carrying out long-term development interventions, including projects designed to support women and girls, and orphaned children.

Afghanistan has endured decades of political and economic instability, with seemingly no end in sight. Conflict, natural disasters and food shortages continue to take a huge toll on the country and its people. In this challenging context, Islamic Relief remains committed to supporting those in need and adapting this support to changing situation on the ground.

In 2022, we signed a landmark \$23 million (£18 million) partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), enabling us to expand our development work, focusing on boosting food production, injecting cash into the local economy and supporting female entrepreneurs in some of the poorest areas of Afghanistan.



**Dedicated to the memory
of Attau Rehman, a
dedicated Islamic Relief
humanitarian killed in
Afghanistan in 2018.**

At Islamic Relief Afghanistan, we have seen an unprecedented increase in the needs of the communities we serve. Islamic Relief has been operating in Afghanistan for over 20 years and seen the legacy from decades of conflict, political instability and climate change all have serious impacts on the country. Throughout these challenges, Islamic Relief has remained by the sides of the people we serve in Afghanistan, expanding our projects and presence in the areas where the need is greatest.

Ever since assuming my position as country director in March 2022, the transformation and evolution of Islamic Relief Afghanistan has been underlined by the organisation's uniqueness as a faith-inspired organisation, something which gives us a distinct advantage in terms of trust building and outreach in a country like Afghanistan. Because of this, we are now present in 15 provinces.

The last few years have seen us change our approach to delivering aid. Decision-making is now led by those closest to the people we help, and our ICT infrastructure and systems have been revamped, which will allow us to manage and better protect our data and information.

And all this has come in challenging conditions. In light of the ban on women working in Afghanistan, Islamic Relief Afghanistan has not terminated any contracts. We have created 'Sisters Groups' where I regularly catch up with our female members of staff to better understand the support they need. We strive to ensure that positions made vacant by female staff will not be replaced by male candidates.

Since the change of government in 2021, Islamic Relief Afghanistan has adapted well. When we saw the change was happening, risk assessments and multiple scenario planings were undertaken allowing us to maintain operations.

There are areas where we wish to improve, for example there is a need to move away from handouts (such as cash transfers) and we have transitioned towards longer term programming. We would like to focus on climate change adaptation, food security and livelihoods and strengthening our orphans programme.

We will continue to put the communities we serve at the heart of what we do, just like I always tell my staff members: The duas from the people we serve, and the smiles they give us when we provide assistance – this is our reward and what motivates us.

Humanitarian aid from organisations such as Islamic Relief eases the suffering by assisting families with their basic needs but these interventions cannot end the crisis in Afghanistan. Halting the suffering of millions requires the international community to remain engaged.

A humanitarian crisis of this magnitude demands urgent attention from the global community.

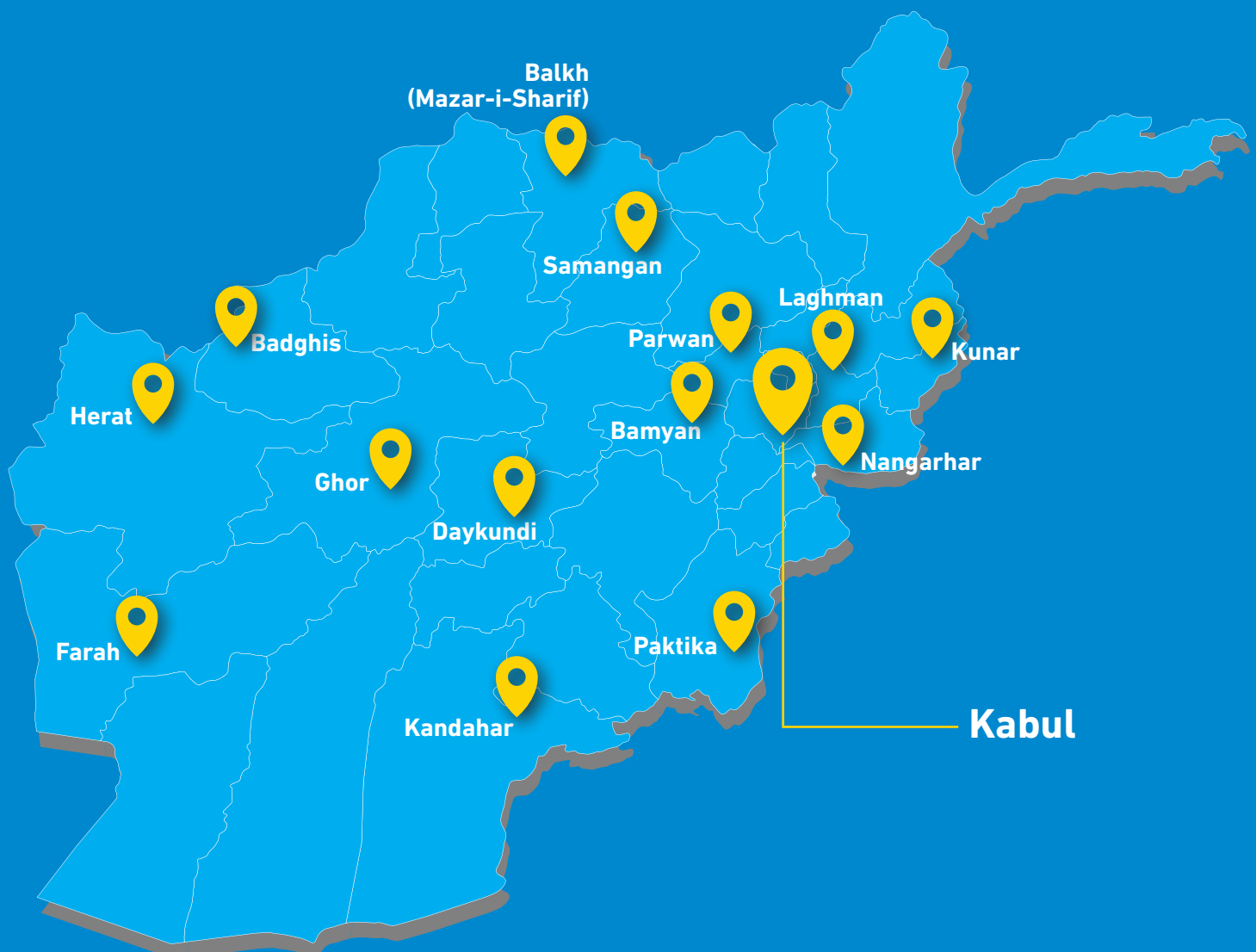


Umair Hasan
Country Director
Islamic Relief Afghanistan



WHERE WE WORK

With more than 600 members of staff working across 15 provinces, Islamic Relief serves communities throughout Afghanistan. Our largest offices are located in Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat, and Balkh. We also work through local partners to serve people in need in areas where we do not have our own office.



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN AFGHANISTAN



Over **40 million** people need humanitarian assistance

Almost **12%** of working age people are unemployed



More than **28 million** people need humanitarian aid

64% of households cannot meet their basic needs



7 million people live in earthquake-prone areas

Nearly **20 million** people didn't know where their next meal was coming from in 2020



6/10 people don't have access to basic hygiene and sanitation facilities

OUR IMPACT IN **NUMBERS**

IN 2022 WE



Delivered programmes worth £33.5 million



Reached 61,400 people through livelihoods projects



Gave winter survival items to more than 53,100 people



Supported more than 6,300 orphans through our Orphans Sponsorship Programme



Helped 390,000 people through our Ramadan and qurbani food distributions



Provided healthcare services to over 35,000 mothers and children



Supported over 7,000 students with education services

“PEOPLE TOLD ME WOMEN CAN’T RUN BUSINESSES. NOW I HAVE 10 EMPLOYEES AND BIG PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.”

More than 100 women in Herat province, western Afghanistan have received training and cash through the UNDP’s Area Based Approach for Development Emergency Initiative (ABADEI) programme. Nafisa is among those to participate in the ABADEI programme, of which Islamic Relief is a partner.

“After the ABADEI training and investment I was able to expand [my business]. Now I employ 10 other women,” says the 27-year-old, who runs a business making doughnuts, cakes, jam and pickled foods.

“So many people told me that women in Afghanistan can’t run businesses. They told me it would fail. But I didn’t give up even when I was losing money at the start. Now I’m doing better than ever.

“I sell the produce we make at the women’s market in Herat town, but since the training I’ve also started reaching out to big stores and bakeries – I go and pitch to them and leave my business card, and some of them now come to my shop and buy in bulk.

“I turned 500 Afghanis (approx. £4.61) into 20,000 (approx. £184) thanks to this support.

“The women I employ are very poor and don’t have many opportunities. I pay them a daily wage of around 200 Afghanis depending on how busy we are and how much there is to make.”





**Nafisa and her
baked goods**

MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF LIFE-SAVING SUPPORT

1992

Islamic Relief begins our work in Afghanistan, providing food through local partners for Ramadan and qurbani. We continue working through partners for the next eight years.

2000

In response to two consecutive years of drought, we open our office in Kandahar - the first Islamic Relief office in Afghanistan.

2001

We launch our first project in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), providing food in drought-affected districts.

2002

Working with the UK government, we train and employ teachers, enabling thousands of children to receive an education for the first time.

2004

The Orphan Sponsorship Programme is launched. It is now our longest running programme in Afghanistan.

A person wearing a brown shawl is seen from behind, looking out over a densely populated city built on a hillside. The city features many small, closely packed buildings. In the background, there are more hills and a hazy sky. A decorative graphic of white diagonal lines is in the top right corner.

2015

A 7.5 magnitude earthquake strikes Badakshan, Islamic Relief responds by constructing shelters for 1,000 affected families, including winterising existing shelters that were not providing sufficient protection from the weather.

2020

Covid-19 leads to loss of life and further economic hardship. We raise awareness by launching campaigns, distribute hygiene kits, assist hospitals with transporting patients, and train healthcare workers.

2021

International forces withdraw and the Taliban retake power. Islamic Relief must adapt to navigate huge complications in supplying aid.

2022

We are among the first responders to a devastating earthquake in Paktika province. We provide emergency aid to over 2,000 displaced families.

2023

One year after signing a landmark partnership with the UNDP, support reaches more than 1,700 women to start and grow their own businesses.

ISLAMIC RELIEF'S PROGRAMMES

LIFE-SAVING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



Islamic Relief is a lifeline when disaster strikes. We respond quickly to provide emergency shelter, food and water to affected communities, including those living in hard-to-reach areas. For much of our time in Afghanistan, conflict has been the main trigger of emergency responses, however this is changing. Climate change is increasing the frequency and

intensity of natural disasters and extreme weather events and has exacerbated the country's worst drought in decades. We work with community leaders to build local knowledge and resilience to disasters, empowering communities to better prepare for and respond to future disasters.

LIFE-CHANGING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES



Islamic Relief works closely with the communities we serve, combining emergency relief with development. We provide life-saving humanitarian aid such as food packs and blankets during the harsh Afghanistan winter and in the wake of natural disasters. We rebuild schools, homes and water and hygiene facilities, ensuring people have access to basic services. We retrain those who have lost their livelihoods, providing employment opportunities through cash-

for work programmes projects like canal and irrigation rehabilitation. We empower women to launch and expand their own businesses.

We develop-term development programmes to support the most vulnerable populations such as women, girls, orphaned children, people with disabilities and older people.

JOINING FORCES TO REACH EVEN MORE PEOPLE

The partnership between Islamic Relief and the UNDP has allowed us to offer support to even more vulnerable people as they rebuild their lives and country. Its main aims are to boost food production, inject cash into the local economy and support female entrepreneurs in some of Afghanistan's poorest areas.

The first partnership is the biggest single agreement under UNDP's ABADEI programme and also the largest project run by Islamic Relief in Afghanistan to date. In March 2023, we entered into a second partnership, which continues to support long-term development.

The ABADEI programme has helped significantly improve the food security of over 170,000 of the most vulnerable population in Afghanistan.

Islamic Relief has supported 1,700 small and medium business owned and operated by women entrepreneurs across the country, with training in business skills such as marketing and financial management, and a \$1,000 (£789) cash grant for the women to invest as they choose.

Enterprises supported by the ABADEI project were able to hire more employees and give new learners an opportunity for practical training. With the increase in income, these enterprises have been able to cope with a higher demand producing more handicrafts, clothes, and other products around Eid and other occasions.

The other strand of the programme saw more than 200 agriculture infrastructure projects completed across six provinces of Afghanistan. The infrastructure projects implemented by the ABADEI programme included building flood protection walls, culverts, concrete irrigation canals and water gates that help protect agricultural land from devastating floods. These improvements largely took place in some of the remotest areas of the country, such as the Marwara district of Kunar province, Batikot district of Nangarhar province and Barmal district of Paktika province. Despite the current financial instability across Afghanistan, a 45 per cent increase in average income was recorded in local areas.



These projects will continue to help local communities for years to come.





BEFORE WE COULDN'T GROW ON THIS LAND. NOW THE WHOLE AREA IS GREEN.

MANY FARMERS ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET, BUT ISLAMIC RELIEF INTERVENTIONS HAVE HELPED EASE THE BURDEN ON SOME, LIKE SAEED.

The 55-year-old lives in Kalatak village, Nangarhar, where farming has suffered from intense flooding in recent years.

“This place was full of water, like a lake [after floods in 2022]. There was water coming into people’s homes and they couldn’t stay living here. People got sick as their homes were damp.”

Islamic Relief and the UNDP have recruited local people to help build and repair infrastructure in the area, providing crucial paid work at a time of mass unemployment.

More than 500 workers cleared and repaired a 4km stretch of drainage canal, and two small bridges were built to help farmers get their produce to market.

“Since we cleared the canal, it’s been much better,” Saeed says. “The wheat

we’ve planted is growing well. Now we can grow vegetables again. We’re planning to construct greenhouses.

“The two new bridges also make it easier to transport the vegetables to market and bring in better agricultural equipment. Before we just had a fragile bridge made of sticks and it couldn’t hold vehicles or anything heavy.”

The community are expecting a “much better” harvest, Saeed says, adding that those employed in the project were able to buy essentials such as oil and sugar to help feed their children. This work is vital as Nangarhar, and many other areas, of Afghanistan are suffering from food shortages and severe price increases on staples.





SUPPORTING YOUNG LEARNERS



Education is a highly politicised topic in Afghanistan, with children's ability to attend school often depending on the country's leadership. Since the Taliban return to power several gains towards expanding access, particularly for women and girls, have been reversed.

Girls over 12 have not been allowed to return to school, leaving 1.1 million without access to formal education. Universities have also been affected, with female students prevented from continuing their studies. Barring women and girls from education is not only an infringement of their human rights, it also has potentially devastating impacts for a country's economy and development prospects.

Afghanistan's education system is also suffering from a lack of safe and suitable buildings and qualified teachers, while poverty means many children do not have the chance complete – or even enter – primary school.

Islamic Relief is committed to ensuring every child in Afghanistan can receive an education. We provide educational materials, such as notebooks, stationery and school uniforms. We help recruit and train teachers and develop materials for university education. We provide support to orphanage schools and help children who had to drop out to re-enrol. In 2022 alone, our work helped more than 7,000 children and young people continue their studies.

“WITHOUT EDUCATION, WE CAN'T THRIVE IN THIS WORLD”



With girls over the age of 12 unable to attend schools some are turning to classes delivered in the community. Teachers have been holding lessons in markets or people's homes and, while it is legal for girls of all ages to attend, they are not free, making it difficult for many families to afford.

“Our school isn't allowed now, so I attend the special courses instead,” says Rozita, a 16-year-old girl from Buthkak district. Her community is mostly made up of internally displaced families who fled violence in Kabul throughout the decades.

“We learn every day and then on Fridays we do tests. Sometimes there are 200 or 300 children. I have been learning English, but I stopped so that I can prioritise mathematics and science. I like maths, chemistry, biology, physics, trigonometry... I really like those subjects, they're like a game or a puzzle that I have to solve.

“I want to pass the exams in these so that I can go to university and become a doctor.”

Rozita, whose father has passed away, is supported by Islamic Relief's Orphan Sponsorship Programme, which provides her mother with regular payments to help support Rozita.

“It costs my mother about 2,000 Afghanis (approx. £15) for one month of courses. But she wants me to go to school and support me to be a doctor, and I love learning.

“Without education we can't thrive in this world.”

LIFE-SAVING HEALTHCARE INTERVENTIONS

Afghanistan has made significant improvements to its healthcare sector in the last two decades, which saw the life expectancy increase from 56 to 64 years and the maternal mortality rate reduce by 50 per cent.

However, the Taliban's return to power has led to a significant decrease in funding for the sector, threatening the public's ability to access life-saving healthcare. Some patients have to travel for several hours on dangerous roads, while others are forced to get into debt or sell their belongings to afford expensive treatment abroad.

Islamic Relief is working with hospitals and operating mobile healthcare facilities to provide obstetric and paediatric care, nutritional support and emergency health services. Our teams are providing basic healthcare in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities. We also deliver training to local healthcare workers, repair damaged hospitals and employ doctors, nurses, midwives and other healthcare professionals, many of whom are women.

An important component of our healthcare work is the referral service for critical patients. If a serious illness is discovered during a check-up, our doctors arrange for the patient to be taken to hospital for further treatment via pathways which did not always exist before. During the coronavirus pandemic in 2021, Islamic Relief supplied hospitals with £800,000 (approx. \$1million) worth of medical supplies, including medicine, diagnostic equipment, gloves and facemasks.

We supported over 20,000 mothers in our health, nutrition and reproductive health facilities, providing poor communities with access to quality community-based healthcare and comprehensive obstetric and newborn care at health points and provincial hospitals. This includes health programmes that provide care and support for pregnant and breastfeeding women.



“Today, I feel good.”

Zainab, seven, and her family have all received treatment from Islamic Relief at the Buthkak Square Camp in Kabul.

“We use the clinic a lot. My mum has back pain sometimes and stomach problems. My brother and sister are also ill today.

“We get help from the Islamic Relief clinic. When I had flu and ear problems I came to the clinic and got medicine.

“Today, I feel good,” Zainab says, adding that she wants to become a doctor like the people that helped her and her family.

'HEALTH AND NUTRITION HAVE COLLAPSED'

"I'm so glad I got the opportunity to serve my people in the field of health and nutrition, which is a dire situation in my country," says Dr Asifa, who works for Islamic Relief Afghanistan.

"My role involves going to the field, meeting with communities, and more so with mothers and children. The services Islamic Relief provides are essential in the community and the health and nutrition sectors have collapsed – most people depend on non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) services.

"We have several health posts where we see pregnant and breastfeeding women seeking services, from prenatal care to nutritional needs and hygiene awareness training. We screen mothers, prescribe relevant drugs and connect them to other health facilities for any further medical attention they may need.



Dr Asifa delivering a dignity pack, containing toothbrush, toothpaste, towel, soap, tissues, detergent and more, that helps individuals meet their immediate hygiene needs.

"If you go to the camps for internally displaced people, you will find crowded conditions and poor sanitation facilities. This has led to a sharp rise in medical needs, particularly in paediatrics and maternal services."

A HIDDEN EPIDEMIC

Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of drug addiction in the world, with 1-3.5 million people reportedly affected. Amid a dire economic situation and the pressures of seemingly unending crises, some are turning to drugs.

Among them is Barakatullah, 27. He spent two years using drugs until encouragement from his family persuaded him to seek help at a rehabilitation centre in Herat.

"People told me this centre would help me, so I came here," he says. "I just want to stop using and live a good life with my wife and son. I've now been clean for 24 days – nearly a whole month."

Islamic Relief supports rehabilitation centres, including the one where Barakatullah received treatment. Our mobile health teams regularly visit to provide treatment and supplies.

The Herat centre currently treats 90 patients, most of whom stay as in-patients for a

treatment course that can last between 45 and 90 days depending on the patient's progress. There is a separate, smaller centre for women and children suffering from drug addiction. Patients are given medicine free of charge, as well as two meals a day and prescribed exercise every morning and evening.

While Afghanistan is never far from international headlines, the country's drug problem is often overlooked. Helping people to recover from drug addiction is a vital step in keeping families together, while a healthy population is essential for development.



Barakatullah talking to Dr Shafiqullah, a member of the Islamic Relief team

MEETING BASIC NEEDS



Latrines were built for families devastated by the Paktika earthquake in 2022

Afghanistan's national water supply system does not meet the demand for 80 per cent of its urban population. Infrastructure has effectively disappeared or is falling into a state of disrepair. As it stands, eight out of every 10 Afghan people drinks unsafe water.

In 2021, the worst drought in decades began, leading to 30 of the country's 34 provinces reporting extremely low water quality. The ongoing drought is affecting not only drinking water but also water needed for agriculture. In its absence, a hunger crisis has emerged. On top of this, the drought is driving internal migration as communities abandon drought-affected areas only to settle in camps where water access is also instable.

Islamic Relief is working in several camps, as well as adjacent host community settlements across the country to improve water and sanitation. In 2022, we built 250 latrines in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces to serve communities displaced by a devastating earthquake. We also built three water networks in each province to provide water for drinking, cooking and farming.

Also in 2022, we supplied around 60,000 individuals with hygiene and sanitation kits and water storage utensils, such as jerrycans.

"I WILL BE ABLE TO CLEAN MYSELF AND MY CHILDREN PROPERLY"

"I received a hygiene kit from Islamic Relief today. The situation of hygiene in the camp is really bad. I'm sure the kits will go a long way in addressing some of the hygiene and sanitation needs of the families." Hasina, Hasina, who lives in Buthkak camp for displaced people



Bibi, 40, has lived in Buthkak camp in Kabul with her children for the past five years after fleeing conflict and drought in her hometown.

"We were running out of food and water. I feared for my [six] children. People were also moving to cities in big numbers in search of food. I joined other families who were fleeing to Kabul. I came to the camp with just a few household items."

Islamic Relief provides families in camps like Buthkak with kits to help improve hygiene and combat the spread of water-borne diseases, which are a risk in the crowded camps. Each hygiene kit contains soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo and nail clippers.

"The kits are handy for us. It will last us some

time. We have shortages when it comes to cleaning ourselves and our dishes. I will be able to clean myself and my children properly after meals and after using the toilet. We are so grateful for the kits," Bibi says.

Islamic Relief also runs hygiene courses aimed at informing communities about the importance of good hygiene practices. These sessions cover handwashing at critical times with soap, maintaining food hygiene and discouraging open defecation.

REBUILDING HOMES, REBUILDING LIVES

Islamic Relief provided emergency shelter to drought affected families in 2019



Providing safe and adequate shelter to people displaced by disasters, conflict and climate change is an important part of Islamic Relief's work in Afghanistan. We build semipermanent, solid and weatherproof homes for vulnerable families, providing privacy and respite from the country's blazing summers and freezing winters.

Through this programme, between August 2022 and June 2023, Islamic Relief has built and repaired over 600 shelters in Herat province.

Since 2001, Islamic Relief has been working in the shelter sector across a number of provinces.

One of our earliest recorded shelter projects was the Afghan Crisis Relief Programme implemented in 2001, in partnership with the United Kingdom government to help Afghan refugees in Balochistan, Pakistan.

After a 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck Badakshan in October 2015, Islamic Relief constructed shelters for close to 1,000 affected families, including improving existing shelters that were not providing sufficient protection from the weather.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Gulabaddin, 40, and his six children were forced to flee their village in Ghor province. Under a UNOCHA-funded shelter programme, Islamic Relief provided the materials and resources needed to construct semi-permanent, solid and weatherproof homes for poor and vulnerable community members like Gulabaddin.

"We are a big family of eight people. I fled from my hometown because of the conflict and drought. We could not afford a rented house, so we lived with a relative for seven years.

"Sometimes the roof was overturned by strong winds and leaks during the rainy season. The weather is also bad. It's hot during the day and cold during the winter.

"When I was living with a relative in a one-roomed mud house, life was difficult. There was no privacy or human dignity at all. Owning a house again was the last thing on my mind. Now I look for work [as] I know my family and property are safe.

"I want to thank Islamic Relief for helping me set up a place I will call home again."

Gulabaddin and his family in front of their new house



HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE

950 school students from Herat received Eid gift packs containing school bags, notebooks, and stationery.



Afghanistan is home to about 1.6 million orphaned children, who have lost either a father or both parents. Losing a parent can impact a child's development and put them at a greater risk of neglect and exploitation. Orphaned children are also more likely to fall into poverty, while their care givers – often extended family – can struggle financially and mentally.

Islamic Relief has so far supported almost 9,000 orphaned children in Afghanistan through our Orphan Sponsorship Programme. For some families, the money allows children to continue their education, while for others, it can help a child access vital healthcare.

The programme is Islamic Relief's largest initiative in Afghanistan, and more than 6,300 children are currently enrolled as of July 2023. Enrolment can even continue after the age of 18, as long as the money provided is used for education purposes, such as attendance of university.

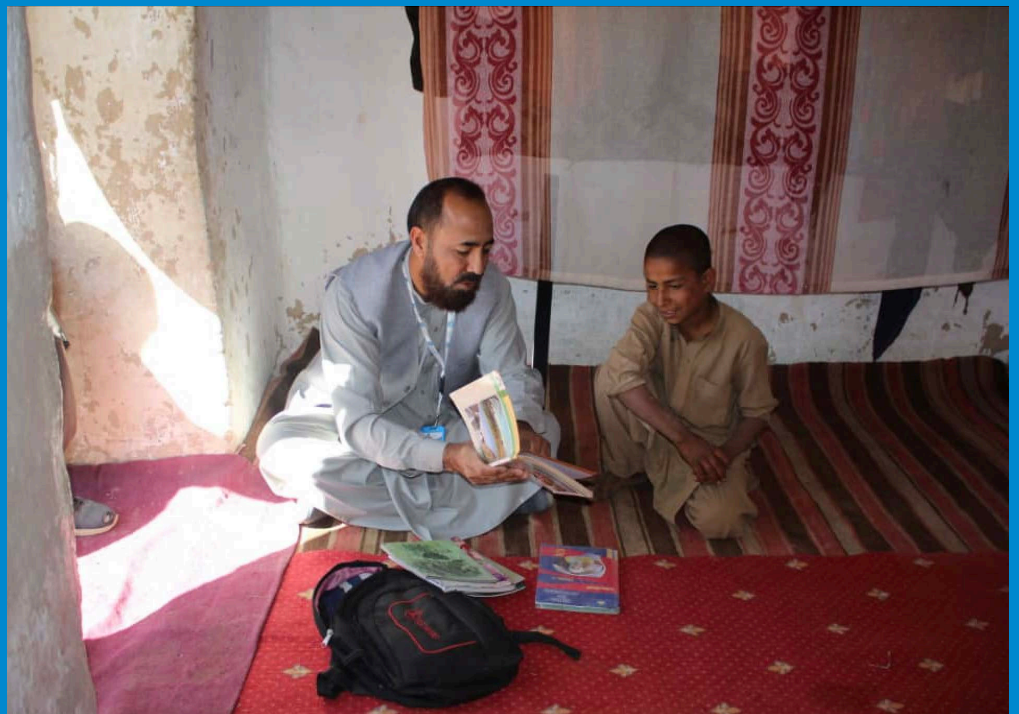
Graduates from the programme in Afghanistan have gone on to become midwives, and university students.



“There are so many positive changes. I received the money from Islamic Relief and this has helped in many ways. I am now more hopeful for my children’s future. Life is still very difficult for us, but it is getting better and I’m thankful to God and anyone who supports us.” – Bibi, widowed mother of four

“It is incredible to see the difference from when we first met Bibi. She now seems happy, her children are happier, they are eating more and going to school. The house is in better condition. It shows the impact that Islamic Relief is having and how providing people with cash can improve their lives.”

Afzal Sadat, Islamic Relief Project Coordinator for the Orphan Sponsorship Programme



Noorallah, 21, dreams of taking his sister Nickbakht, 24, away from their remote village in Bamyan province where winter’s heavy snowfall cuts them off from the outside world.

Without parents, and with Nickbakht prevented from working, the siblings rely on the Orphan Sponsorship Programme to provide food, afford Noorallah’s education and fund a brighter future.

“The Orphan Sponsorship Programme is a blessing. It’s helped me to finish school and graduate – without it this would not have been possible. It also [covers] food for me and my sister. The situation is very difficult, but the money helps us. My dream is to live in Kabul with a good job working with computers. I’ve discussed with my sister and if I get into Kabul university then my sister will come with me and we’ll rent somewhere cheap together.”



PARCELS OF JOY FOR RAMADAN AND EID



Every year during Ramadan Islamic Relief provides vulnerable households with food parcels to ensure those enduring hardship can break their fast. When it's time to celebrate Eid al-Adha, our qurbani programme delivers meat to families who would otherwise go without.

Wherever possible, we integrate these seasonal food distributions with other humanitarian and development programmes,

ensuring we reach those most in need. Islamic Relief also distributes gifts during Eid al-Fitr, including new clothes for children, to ease families' burdens during the holidays.

Our Ramadan and qurbani programmes combined provide food to 390,000 people in Afghanistan each year, enabling them to observe and celebrate these special occasions.

EASING EVERYDAY BURDENS

Khadija, 35, lives with her five children in a single room on the outskirts of Kabul. Since her husband abandoned the family, Khadija is forced to trek three kilometres every morning to the city in search of work. She often returns penniless.

The fragile state of the Afghanistan economy exacerbates issues. The price of basic household items such as flour, oil, rice and cooking gas have almost doubled in recent years, leaving many families unable to afford essential items.

In response, many families have been forced to sell their properties, cut back on meals, or send their children to work to put food on the table. Khadija's two eldest children are now employed in a carpet weaving shop, making a joint monthly income of around £18.30.

““Before my husband fell into the drug menace, we could afford meat once a week or even a month. [Now] meat is not cooked in our home for months on end,” Khadija says.

For Khadija and her family, food packages during Ramadan are a blessing and provide instant relief from their day-to-day worries. Receiving qurbani meat is only the second time her family have been able to eat meat in five months.

“When we had dinner, my children and I prayed for those who paid for our meat and delivered it to us. May Allah (SWT) reward them abundantly. We are so happy. It's a different day.”



PROVIDING COMFORT IN WINTER



Afghan winters can be brutal, with temperatures dropping as low as minus -25°C for months at a time. The cold makes life more difficult for the country's vulnerable people and remote communities can even become completely isolated by snowfall.

The cold season brings with it a rise in respiratory problems and illnesses, which can become more serious for those unable to afford medicine. The high prices of wood and fuel means displaced people often resort to burning plastic, textiles and other flammable materials, risking inhaling toxic fumes in a bid to stay warm.

Islamic Relief's winter programme in Afghanistan is one of our largest worldwide. Families are supported throughout the winter months with provisions of food, clothing, blankets and fuel. In 2022, 7,500 vulnerable families in eight provinces were provided with food and three double-sized, double-layered blankets per household to help them cope during the cold months as part of our annual programme.

Alongside this programme, we also worked with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to reach an additional 2,500 families, providing a one-off cash payment to pregnant and breastfeeding women to cover blankets, winter clothes and fuel.

Mina lives with her seven young children in Bamyan, a mountainous province in central Afghanistan. The family home is a basic one-room building with dried mud walls, on a hill in a small village a few miles outside Bamyan town. These living conditions make winter a particularly tough time of the year for Mina and her family.

"Winter is so cold here. I am scared for my children in the next winter if the situation does not improve before then. The whole village is in the same situation. Lots of people are unemployed and now just have to stay at home. They used to have jobs but now unemployment is so high."

THANK YOU TO THOSE SUPPORTING OUR WORK IN AFGHANISTAN

Islamic Relief's vital work is made possible by the generosity of our supporters, donors and partners across Afghanistan. We warmly thank the individuals, businesses and institutional donors for their support for our operations, which are a lifeline for so many vulnerable people.

Our international partners include:

Institutional donors:



UN and specialised agencies





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