



UNFPA Afghanistan
ANNUAL REPORT
2017





Delivering a world where
every pregnancy is wanted
every child birth is safe and
every young person's
potential is fulfilled

Annual Report 2017



Preface

Last year, 2017, was a year of successes and challenges for the United Nations Population Fund in Afghanistan. Despite the challenging security environment, we and our partners in government and civil society have strived and continued with our commitment to reach the furthest behind and the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, in our attempt to leave no one behind.

We are proud that our flagship reproductive health programme of family health houses led by midwives has continued to provide essential lifesaving maternal and family planning health services to thousands of Afghan women in the most remote areas of the country. Our dedicated staff at the UNFPA office and our implementing partners have trained police, legal and health workers to provide services and change lives of thousands of survivors of gender-based violence.

Addressing the pervasively high maternal mortality and gender-based violence require continuous political as well as financial support. There is renewed strong commitment from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to address these issues as priorities.

The Afghan youth parliament has provided a functional platform for the youth to highlight their issues and voice them in the presence of the country leadership. The participation of various ministries during youth parliamentary sessions has helped generate dialogue with the youth and put their agenda at the highest level of government.

This annual report is presenting the results achieved through the work of UNFPA and partners, both in government and non-governmental organizations, with financial support from various donors. The contribution of all the partners has enabled us to save lives of Afghan women and girls and improve their wellbeing. The most remote communities have been reached with emergency reproductive health services, gender-based violence prevention and response, as well as enhancing young people's health and development.

These achievements would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of all the partners and support of our donors. We are also most grateful to the tireless work of our implementing partners and service providers who work in the most remote areas with severe weather and security conditions.

Dr. Bannet Ndyabangwi
Representative, UNFPA Afghanistan

About UNFPA

United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA is the United Nations agency which leads global efforts to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA is mandated by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, to reduce infant and child mortality, reduce neonatal, maternal mortality, and increase access to reproductive health services including family planning. The Cairo Consensus placed these population and development issues within a human rights based framework, and UNFPA is committed to integrating human rights into its work globally.

The UNFPA strategic plan 2018-2021 is aligned with 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The goal is to "achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health, realize reproductive health rights, and reduce maternal mortality and improve the lives of women, adolescent and youth, enabled by population dynamic, human rights and gender equality".

The new strategic plan has four outcomes

Outcome 1: Ensure every woman, adolescent and youth everywhere, especially those furthest behind has utilized integrated sexual and reproductive health services and exercised reproductive rights, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

Outcome 2: Ensure every adolescent and youth, in particular adolescent girls, is empowered to have access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in all contexts.

Outcome 3: Ensure Gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and reproductive rights are advanced in development and humanitarian settings

Outcome 4: Ensure everyone, everywhere, is counted, and accounted for, in the pursuit of sustainable development.



Fourth Country Programme

2015 – 2019

UNFPA started working in Afghanistan in 1976. During the years of conflict in the country, UNFPA provided reproductive health services to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

In 2002, after the fall of the Taliban, UNFPA re-established its country office in Afghanistan. The UNFPA long term support programme in Afghanistan was initiated with the rehabilitation of 3 maternal hospitals in Kabul.

Since then, UNFPA has implemented three Country Programmes, providing financial and technical support to the Afghan Government.

The fourth country programme was signed by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, represented by the Ministry of Economy and UNFPA. A programme steering committee was established under the leadership of Ministry of Economy with members from Ministries of Public Health, Women's Affairs, Interior Affairs, the Central Statistics Organisation of Afghanistan, the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, Kabul University and the Afghan Parliament. The committee meets annually to oversee the progress in programme implementation and provide strategic guidance.

During the current country programme 2015 – 2019, UNFPA has been working with different government partners including;

- Ministry of Public Health on Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Adolescent and Child Health (RMNCH), covering family planning, midwifery education, treating pelvic floor disorders including obstetric fistula. (Thematic Area 1).
- Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Office of the Second Vice President, the Afghan Parliament, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Education to advocate for the needs and voices of young people, and their place at the table. (Thematic Area 2).
- Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Independent Human Rights Commission, the Judiciary, Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Public Health on the Elimination of Gender-based Violence. (Thematic Area 3).
- The Central Statistics Organisation of Afghanistan, the Afghan Parliament, Ministry of Economy and the Kabul University to build a culture of authentic data generation and utilization and a human resource for data management. (Thematic Area 4).

Pregnancy by Choice not by Chance

Saving mothers' lives

Currently, UNFPA – the United Nations Population Fund continues its commitment to support Afghanistan, both financially and technically, to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the country's National Development Strategies and Priorities.

Maternal Mortality in Afghanistan is among the highest in the region. The Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey (2015) data on maternal mortality released with observations by the Ministry of Public Health reported 1,291 deaths per 100,000 live births in the country.

Afghanistan, therefore, has enormous need for more maternal health services, especially in remote and hard to reach areas to improve access and public awareness on maternal care before, during and after pregnancy, and for family planning.



UNFPA, in line with Ministry of Public Health priority to deliver Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health and Family Planning Services in remote and hard to reach areas has established Family Health Houses. Trained midwives provide reproductive health services to the population through community based health service initiative. Additionally, UNFPA has supported Fistula Treatment Centres in Kabul and Herat, and a midwifery help line to provide distance support to midwives, especially in remote areas on complicated pregnancies and child births. Our family planning programme has actively promoted modern contraceptives as well as conducted advocacy for rights based family planning and birth-spacing across the country.

"Now I feel much better and I am very thankful to Amena, who helped me recover from a mortal situation and saved my life."

Khurshid, mother of four, was brought to UNFPA Family Health House in Arvige Village of Chesht-e Sharif in Herat. She was severely bleeding due to miscarriage.

123

Family Health Houses were functional to provide the following services in 4 provinces.

509,226

People were provided OPD services.

19,907

Pregnant women were provided with antenatal care.

9,792

Mothers were provided postnatal care.

7,819

Child births were assisted by midwives.

4,860

Women were provided family planning and birth spacing services.

166

Health service providers from 55 health facilities in 5 provinces were trained on Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives.

16

Master trainers were trained in the insertion of Uterine Contraceptive Device and Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive.

2,000

Implants were inserted for family planning.

214

Women civil society activists from 12 provinces were trained to promote family planning in their communities.

250

Journalists across the country were trained to promote family planning in their respective role.

44

Reproductive health programme managers and reproductive health stock managers from 11 provinces were trained in reproductive health commodity security and CHANNEL software.

10%

of health facilities across the country were provided modern contraceptives.



3351 Calls,

midwives, especially, from remote areas reached Midwifery Helpline to get distance technical advice and save lives of mothers and babies.

34

High level members of Afghan Midwives Association were trained in management and leadership.

5

Afghan surgeons were trained -for advanced obstetric fistula surgical repair.

13

Staff of Herat obstetric fistula treatment centre including surgeons, midwives, and anesthesiologist were trained in obstetric fistula surgical repair.

212 Women

living with obstetric fistula and pelvic floor disorder across the country were provided with successful surgical repairs.

60 Women

were provided with reintegration support after a successful obstetric fistula surgical repair.

16

Health care providers were trained in Basic Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care from Nouristan and Badghis provinces.

"Thanks to Mahmooda, the midwife and those who helped her over the phone to save my life. I have recovered completely now."

Hafsa, suffered sudden heavy bleeding after a normal delivery of her first child at a clinic in remote Parwan village with attendance of Mahmooda the midwife, who then called the midwifery helpline, got help and saved Hafsa's life.



"Life was miserable, I slept in the hall way and my husband slept in the room. I felt very bad, but couldn't blame him. I smelt bad all the time and it was not easy to stay clean."

Najiba Hayat, mother of 6, got surgical repair for obstetric fistula at the UNFPA newly established Obstetric Fistula Treatment Centre in Herat.

Afghanistan National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) 2018-2021, was developed and approved by Ministry of Public Health.

Family Planning Behavioral Study was conducted. The study provided evidence for the use and non-use of contraceptives and demand for family planning to facilitate programmes/projects planning.

Ensure reproductive health services in humanitarian situations

In recent months, the numbers of Afghan civilians returning to their homeland after many years as refugees in neighboring Pakistan have significantly increased, putting a severe strain on Afghan authorities and relief organisations to cope with the influx.

According to the United Nations 2017 humanitarian needs overview, an estimated 9.3 million people in Afghanistan need humanitarian assistance, with 372,000 women who are pregnant at the time of such need. These include returnees and internally displaced people living in remote areas.

Midwives were deployed to crisis hit areas and areas with concentration of returnees. Two clinics one each at zero point and IOM centre were established to deliver services.

"When the conflict broke in Qunduz, I was pregnant. We fled the conflict and came to Takhar. Since our arrival, we have been selling our belongings to make a living. Thanks to the midwife who checked me for free. I went to see her many times, and when it was the time for my delivery the midwife took me to the hospital in her car. I am very thankful for all she did for me."

In 2017, through UNFPA's humanitarian support;

112,000

Internally displaced people, returnees and host communities were provided with reproductive health care services.

13

Health facilities including Nangarhar provincial hospital received sufficient emergency reproductive health supplies.

66

Health service providers were trained in emergency obstetric and newborn care, minimal initial service package, and clinical management of rape survivors.

Ensuring Basic Rights Empowering generations



UNFPA's youth programme has been working closely with the deputy ministry of youth affair, the Afghan Parliament and the office of the second vice president, H.E. Sarwar Danish, who chairs the Youth Inter-Ministerial Committee in the country.

During 2017, different youth projects offered the following services;

87,508

Young men and women were provided reproductive health and gender-based violence counselling by the UNFPA youth health line (120) through expert youth counselors.

13,983

Youth including boys and girls were provided youth friendly health services in 5 provinces.

150

Youth including boys and girls were trained in peer education.

80

School teachers were trained in primary emergency health care service provision.

40

School health posts were established in Kabul schools and equipped with first aid kits.

Family Life Education curriculum for School was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health. The material is currently under review by Ministry of Education.

Second annual session of the Youth Parliament was held at the Wolesi Jirga for 5 days with 122 youth parliament members from 34 provinces.

“Youth parliament is an opportunity for members to engage in democratic processes, use evidence-based reasoning and identify challenges and solutions.”

His Excellency CEO of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah at the inauguration of the youth parliament.

Eliminating gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is one of the most prevalent human rights abuses. Worldwide 1 in 3, while in Afghanistan 1 in 2 women has experienced physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime (Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey, 2015).

Elimination of gender-based violence, especially violence against women requires comprehensive action at all levels, including and most importantly within the health sector and law enforcement agencies which are considered as entry points for survivors of such violence.

UNFPA Afghanistan, therefore, works to build expertise of the health sector and the police sector in response to violence against women and girls and to establish mechanisms in both sectors for appropriate management and response to gender-based violence cases.

UNFPA technical and financial support across the country has enabled different projects through the Afghan Government and our implementing partners to deliver the following;

1,380

Law enforcement personnels were trained on police taking action on gender-based violence and standard operating procedures.

40

Uniformed police officers were certified as master trainers and facilitators in police taking action on violence against women and standard operating procedures.

32

Batches of Training of Trainers were conducted in 16 provinces, 2 batches in each province, for appropriate management and response to gender-based violence cases.

844

healthcare providers from 18 provinces were trained in gender-based violence data collection and standard operating procedure and gender-based violence psychosocial counseling.

10,103

Gender-based violence cases were registered and supported through UNFPA family protection centres in 18 provinces.

2,642

Gender-based violence cases were referred to UNFPA family protection centres from other entities, showing the credibility of the family protection centres

2,441

Gender-based violence cases were referred to other sectors within the multi-sector response to gender-based violence.

275

Comprehensive health centre, comprehensive health centre plus and district hospitals in 12 provinces had functional gender-based violence case management mechanisms established with the support of UNFPA in 2017





Data for Development

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was supported to ingrain a culture of accurate and authentic data development and utilization.

Technical and financial support was provided to the Central Statistics Organisation of Afghanistan, the Afghan Parliament, the Afghan Ministry of Economy and the Kabul University.

Additionally, UNFPA supported the development of national policies and strategies of the Afghan Government in line with national priorities, the sustainable development goals, Afghanistan National Development Strategy, and United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

UNFPA in 2017 generated knowledge on population development for evidence-based decision making;

- **Baghlan and Badghis Provinces'** comprehensive Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey data was made available.
- **Population data for the entire country**, as commissioned by H.E. President Ghani, the CSO with technical and financial support from the UNFPA produced new age and gender disaggregated estimates of the Afghan population at high spatial resolution and with national coverage.
- **National Population Policy** was finalized after a comprehensive review by members of parliament, sectoral ministries and the members of the national population policy task force. A Costed Action Plan for the implementation of the policy was also developed and finalized.
- **Family Planning Expenditure Survey for 2016** was conducted.
- UNFPA supported the development of **a strategic framework and action plan for the Afghanistan Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development.**

UNFPA Donors

The work of UNFPA Afghanistan and the achievements accomplished were supported by the following donors in 2017:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia **(DFAT)**
- Italian Agency for Development Cooperation **(IADC)**
- Republic of Korea **(RoK)**
- Department for International Development of the United Kingdom **(DFID)**
- Global Affairs, Canada **(GAC)**
- United States Agency for International Development **(USAID)**
- Maternal Health Trust Fund **(MHTF)**

Challenges and Lessons Learned

While insecurity was the biggest challenge in 2017 across all UNFPA interventions. Other challenges and lessons learned were as follows.

The need for better inter-ministerial coordination on family planning; reporting by the private sector working on family planning; and the need for improvement of capacity in the Family Planning Department in Ministry of Public Health was recognized.

On the other hand, delays in fund release and budgetary limitations resulted in delays of project deliverables.

Community engagement and support is crucial for the successful implementation of programmes. The involvement of communities in selection of the community health workers, midwifery students from local communities for training, the establishment of family health action groups and community shuras and the construction of the family health houses with community contributions including provision of land and other supplies for family health houses is a case in point.

Evidently, prepositioning of reproductive health supplies, in 2017, to be used during humanitarian crisis in high risk areas proved very effective.

Selection of people for training from government and other partners without adequate screening of competencies and correct deployment after the training has been a challenge, especially, the training of police, legal and other key actors by UNFPA gender programme.





Looking Forward in 2018

UNFPA Afghanistan will continue to work with government partners including; DMOYA, Office of the Second Vice President, Afghan Parliament, MoPH, MoE, MoI, MoWA, AIHRC, The Judiciary, MoHRA, CSO, MoEc, the Kabul University and Kabul Medial University in 2018.

For more efficiency and to respond to the needs on the ground, UNFPA will conduct a midterm review of the 4th country programme action plan to align interventions with the ANPDF, sector priorities, the SDG Agenda 2030, One UN/GolRA programme and UNFPA Strategic Plan.

While maintaining current technical and financial support and the services being delivered by UNFPA across the country, UNFPA plans to expand its programmes to cover more provinces in 2018, hence to reach more Afghan populations in need.

UNFPA for instance will expand the family health houses programme to 7 new provinces, thereby establishing 150 new family health houses and train 175 new community midwives to be stationed in the family health houses.

Other reproductive health services delivered by UNFPA shall be expanded, including family planning to cover 4 new provinces, and the establishment of obstetric fistula treatment centre in Nangarhar province.

UNFPA will sustain and continue to expand its humanitarian assistance during emergencies and for internally displaced populations and returnees from neighboring Pakistan.

UNFPA will continue and expand its programme to respond and address gender-based violence issues and reach more survivors of such violence, by establishing 6 news Family Protection Centres in 2018.

Additionally, UNFPA support for data availability and utilization will continue to enhance the capability of the Central Statistics Organization of Afghanistan, Kabul University and the Afghan Parliament in data generation, analysis and the use of data for development programmes and planning in the country.





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