

Integrating Refugees in Northern Afghanistan

The German government is helping the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations to provide accommodation and basic infrastructure in northern Afghanistan in order to facilitate the integration of internally displaced persons and returnees into host communities.



Situation

Decades of conflict and natural disasters that have destroyed people's livelihoods are forcing large parts of the Afghan population to leave their home communities. According to UN estimates, some two million people are currently seeking refuge within the country. A persistent drought added over half a million new internally displaced persons in 2018 alone. At the same time, many people returned home from neighbouring countries, including around 770,000 people just from Iran.

The cheap price of land is frequently leading both returnees and internally displaced persons to settle on the outskirts of major cities, fuelling rapid population growth that is increasing social and economic pressures. There is a lack of adequate accommodation and vital resources such as food and water, while the labour market and public infrastructure are overwhelmed by this strong population growth. This situation often creates tensions and conflicts between host communities on the one hand and internally displaced persons and refugees on the other.

AT A GLANCE



Activities in the provinces Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan

Programme: Integrating Refugees in Northern Afghanistan (IDP)

Commissioned by: German Federal Foreign Office (AA)

Partner: Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MoRR)

Implementing organisations: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Provinces: Balkh

Provinces: Jawzjan

Provinces: Samangan

Programme objective: Afghan authorities are more readily viewed as an effective actor in integrating internally displaced persons and returnees in selected parts of northern Afghanistan.

Overall term: January 2017 – May 2020

Objective

The project aims to ease tensions in affected areas and avoid conflict. To this end, accommodation is being provided for returnees and internally displaced persons, and basic infrastructure is being established that is also benefiting the host communities. At the same time, authorities within the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MoRR) that are responsible for integrating returnees and internally displaced persons are to be strengthened. The intention is for these authorities to be viewed as effective actors by the Afghan people and bring stability to the regions affected.

Measures and impact

The main duties of authorities within the MoRR include identifying the support required by host communities, internally displaced persons and returnees. The German Government is funding training courses for MoRR staff geared specifically towards boosting efficiency and gathering data in a professional way. This is enabling the authorities to conduct professional household surveys and organise discussion groups with the parties involved. Ideas and suggestions for improving the situation are being exchanged in dialogue with locals, resulting in tangible measures that meet the needs of the refugees and host communities and thus reduce the potential for conflict over the long term. Afghan authorities can also independently replicate examples of successful practice in other locations.

This approach is already bearing fruit. For instance, accommodation has so far been built for 555 families in need in order to facilitate their integration into their host communities. Another 600 families have been given materials to maintain their homes themselves. Measures to improve basic infrastructure have also been determined and implemented, benefiting both disadvantaged households in host communities as well as displaced persons and refugees. These include in particular improving the supply of drinking water, infrastructure and sanitation facilities. Building and renovating local community centres and schools are among other measures. Since 2017, for instance, nine drinking water systems have been installed or repaired in affected communities and nearly four kilometres of new roads have been built. All in all, this has improved living conditions for some 40,000 people to date.

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