

# AFGHANISTAN

## PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS (PSN)

UNHCR's *People with Specific Needs (PSN)* program is an integral part of the "2016-2017 UNHCR Regional Plan to Build Resilience and Solutions to Afghans in South West Asia." It provides targeted assistance on an individual basis to people with acute vulnerabilities and protection risks amongst UNHCR people of concern: documented returnees, refugees, conflict-induced IDPs. Extremely vulnerable individuals from the local communities and undocumented returnees are also considered as beneficiaries, on an exceptional basis. **This report covers the period 01 January through 30 October**

JAN – OCT 2016

INITIALLY IDENTIFIED	4,863
PSN ASSISTED*	4,293
PSN – female HoH/ women a risk	55%
PSN - Single Parents	30%
PSN – persons with DISABILITY	515
PSN PARTNERS	6

### ON THE WAY TO SELF-RELIANCE

Kandahar: Eight years ago, Breshna's husband was killed by insurgents as he was working as a driver at the Kandahar air field. They had returned from Pakistan in 2007. She had one child born in exile and another son was born shortly after her husband's death.



Breshna's economic situation deteriorated significantly following the death of her husband. "My father died and my brother and other relatives left me alone. There was nobody to help me and my children. In the beginning I was living in a tent while later my neighbour granted me a very old room which cost AFN 1,200 per month. I was washing clothes and utensils in the neighbouring houses earning enough only for a few bread loafs to feed my children."

Breshna's case became known to OHW in Kandahar which, following an assessment of her plight, provided food as well as a sewing machine, materials and some clothes to start a home- business. She is now tailoring and making clothes for people in her neighbourhood. On average she is able to generate a revenue between AFN 150 and 300 per day (USD 3 to 6) and is able to adequately support her children. As a result of her improved circumstances, Breshna's children will be able to attend school.

### From social outcast to micro-entrepreneur

Most of the individuals assisted under UNHCR's PSN program are in some way affected by conflict, but Bibi Hawa has a different reason for having fled her community. Facing ostracism within her community as a result of the departure of her daughter and subsequently, her husband, Bibi Hawa fled to a new location with her six remaining children. As a female-head of household without the support of her extended family, Bibi Hawa's living condition rapidly deteriorated. Over time, she found herself unable to cover even the basic needs of her family. When UNHCR's partner discovered her, she and her six children were living in a single, poorly-constructed room, paid for through piecemeal chores in the homes of her neighbors. Bibi Hawa expressed interest in running a small grocery shop and was assisted with US\$ 300 to open her business.



Bibi Hawa's life has been transformed. As the only woman in the area with a shop of her own, she now earns up to \$100 per month, which covers daily expenses for her family as well as the educational costs of her children. Commenting on the importance of the support received through the PSN program, Bibi Hawa commented, "I am happy that I can handle my life challenges in a better condition, however, I cannot forget the absence of my husband and daughter" said Bibi Hawa.

## INITIAL PSN IDENTIFICATION

The identification of the beneficiaries occurs through various channels, primarily through direct contact with beneficiaries.

- Vulnerable returnees are generally identified at the encashment centres or through enhanced returnee monitoring.
- Vulnerable IDPs are identified through various mechanisms:
  - by partners or by UNHCR staff during Joint assessments with other humanitarian partners in the initial emergency phase;
  - by UNHCR and UNHCR partners during protection monitoring missions in the emergency phase and in more prolonged situations;
  - by operational partners and local authorities, who refer cases to UNHCR and to the PSN networks active in various regions/ provinces.
- Vulnerable refugees in Khost are identified through the biometric verification process as well as through UNHCR staff assessments and referrals from partners.
- Local communities and other people in need of assistance may be identified through partners, by approaching UNHCR Offices or by UNHCR staff during missions and assessments.

**Between January and 31 October 2016, 4,863 individual cases have been identified as PSN in all regions and directed to UNHCR dedicated PSN partners for further assessment.** Of those, 4,777 cases have been detected in the field during protection monitoring mission (emergency and post-emergency phase) or dedicated PSN assessments. In addition 71 cases approached UNHCR offices, 10 were identified at encashment centres and 5 cases were identified at the border.

Methods of Identification	%
Protection monitoring missions in the field/ assessments (IDPs and returnees)	98.2
Self-referrals to UNHCR Offices	1.5
Identification at the Encashment Centres	0.2
Others	0.1

## SPECIFIC NEEDS

Individuals are assessed in accordance with standard Specific Needs Codes defining different individual vulnerabilities. Those include single female head-of household, child-heading household, older persons with no family/community support, persons in urgent need of medical treatment, persons in urgent need for legal support, persons with disabilities, and families with extreme economic vulnerability due to high dependency ration (exceptional cases)<sup>1</sup>.

## COVERAGE OF NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

In the implementation of the PSN Program, UNHCR works with several national partners. This includes protection monitoring partners active in the identification of the vulnerable individuals during monitoring missions, as well as dedicated PSN partners who assess the identified cases, present them for discussion in the Approval Committee and deliver the approved assistance. In 2016, PSN implementing partners included: APA, ARAA, CHA, CRDSA, OHW and RSSAO.

<sup>1</sup> Specific Needs Codes are based on UNHCR Inter-Office Memorandum No. 030/2009 Field Office Memorandum No. 030/2009, "Guidance on the Use of Standardized Specific Needs Codes" adapted to the local context".

Region	Number of PSN Networks	PSN Partner
Central,	3 Central Region, 2 (Central Highland)	APA
Central Highland	2 Bamyan and Daikundi)	APA
Western Region	1 Western Region (Herat) other Provinces under creation	ARAA (Herat), CHA (returnees), CRDSA (Badghis, Farah)
Southern Region	3 (Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Nimrooz)	OHW
Eastern Region	1 Nangarhar	RSSAO
Khost and Paktika	1 Khost (NWA refugees)	APA

At field level, UNHCR and partners are coordinating information sharing and activities through the PSN Networks, a coordination forum of humanitarian actors operating in various fields of humanitarian assistance (medical, psychosocial, legal etc.) and authorities (Department of Refugees and Repatriation/ DoRR, Department of Women Affairs/ DOWA, Department of Social Affairs, Labour, Martyrs and Disabled/ DoSALMD). During the PSN network meetings, partners exchange information on the scope of their programs (beneficiary selection criteria, coverage etc.) and general discussions on possible referral mechanisms take place. For confidentiality reasons, in light of the type of specific needs of some PSN (e.g. women at risk), the referral of cases is then conducted bilaterally between UNHCR partner and the specialised humanitarian agency receiving the PSN case for support.

## ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF PSN CASES

After the identification phase – largely at field level during protection / return monitoring missions - and the initial recording of basic data and profile of the individual, the case is transferred to one of UNHCR PSN partners. UNHCR PSN partner assesses the case through a home visit to better detect the vulnerabilities, in line with the PSN Guidelines, to assess the needs and the capacity of the beneficiary, and to propose the possible assistance, in consultation with the beneficiary. For every case assessed a confidential dossier is created with all supporting documents (e.g. copy of VRF, PoR Card, or a letter from the *shura* detailing the circumstances of the case, results of the visit, recommendations etc.).

After the field assessment is conducted, UNHCR PSN partner presents an evaluation of the case with initial recommendations to an Approval Committee, comprising UNHCR Sections (Protection, Field and Program Sections), UNHCR partner and – if available – a PSN partner acting as observer. The Approval Committee meets periodically in every UNHCR Office in the field to review the case and to determine the appropriate individual assistance based on the evidence of needs and on the indications of the beneficiary as presented by UNHCR PSN Partner.

When other complementary assistance may be needed, or when the assistance required by the individual is out of the scope of UNHCR and partners’ activities and expertise (e.g. psychosocial support, specialised assistance for victims of mine incidents, specialised legal assistance etc.), the Approval Committee proposes the referral of the case to other partners of the PSN Network.

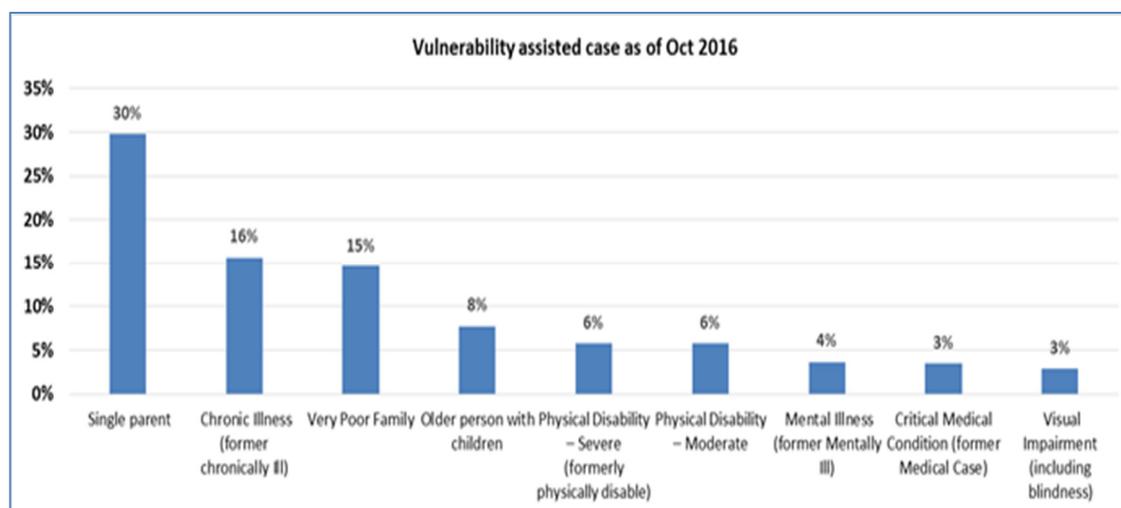
Statistics on UNHCR program for PSN are regularly disseminated with interested authorities and with the PSN network.

**From the beginning of 2016 to the end of October, out of the 4,863 identified cases 4,293 cases were considered for screening and submitted to the Approval Committees in the various UNHCR Offices. The rest of the cases were either not matching the criteria, or were already assisted, or were immediately referred to specialised partners. After the examination and the decision by the Approval Committees, the 4,293 cases were either assisted directly by UNHCR partners or referred to specialised actors that are part of the PSN Networks.**

## PROFILE OF ASSISTED PSN

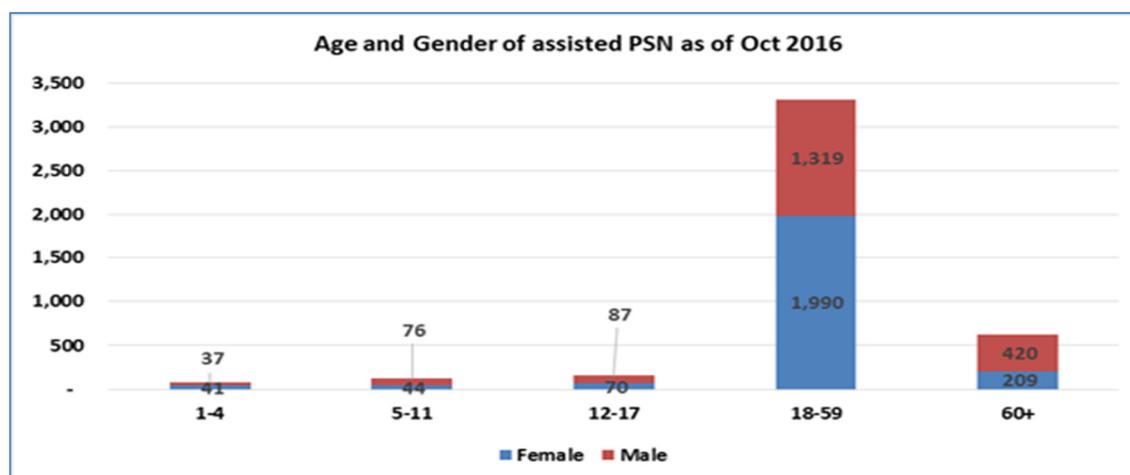
### A. Type Of Vulnerability

Amongst the 4,293 PSN cases examined by the Approval Committee, the most frequently addressed vulnerability were single parenthood (30%), particularly women heading household; chronic illness (16%); very poor family(15%)<sup>2</sup> followed by other conditions including elderly head of households and various forms of disabilities.



### B. Age and Sex of beneficiaries

Out of the total 4,293 assisted or referred PSNs by the Approval Committee, 2,354 were female (54.9%) and 1,939 cases were male (45.1%)<sup>3</sup>. The prevalent age group was between 18 and 59 years old (3,309; 77%), followed by individuals above 60 years old (14.7%).



### C. Type of Assistance

The type of PSN assistance was selected according to the result of the assessment and consultation with beneficiary conducted by the PSN partner, including the profile and the capacity of the identified PSN. The approach may vary from an individualised cash support to face urgent medical or expenditures, or legal fees (e.g. to obtain a Tazkera), to interventions more

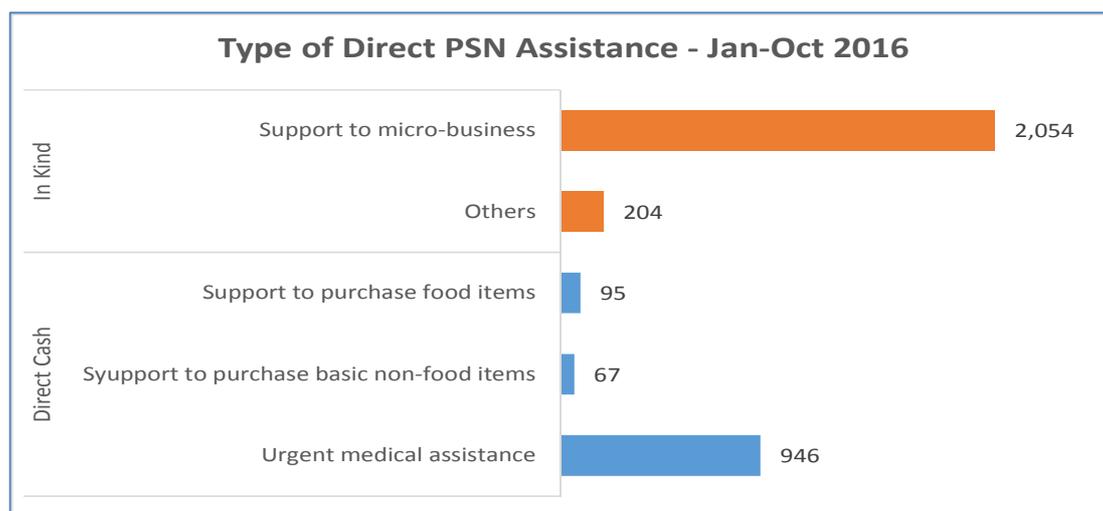
<sup>2</sup> Based on the income and size of the family as well as on the presence of at least one vulnerability amongst members of the family.

<sup>3</sup> This represents the age and gender of the primary beneficiary detected as PSN due to one or more specific vulnerabilities.

holistically looking at family resilience (e.g. support to start of a micro business by a women head of household).

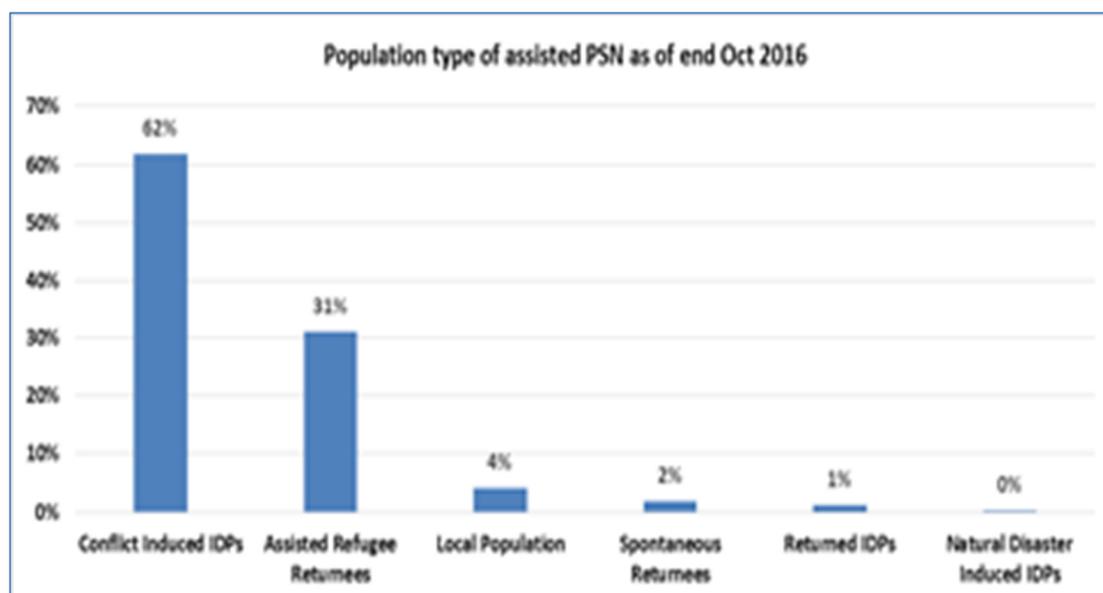
Of the 4,293 cases examined by the Approval Committee, 3,631 were cases where a vulnerability/ specific of the single individual was addressed also with the attempt to support the overall family resilience, while 662 were individual cases, where the assistance was an immediate amount of cash to face urgent protection needs.

Out of the 4,293 cases examined by the Approval Committee, 3,366 cases were directly assisted through project funds. The remainder were referred through the PSN network to other service providers, largely for psychosocial support, medical care of specific nature (e.g. victims of mines and IED explosions to the UNMAS/ MACCA ACAP project), for civil documentation (e.g. to NRC-supported ICLA), to be considered by various humanitarian actors for other assistance (e.g. WFP for nutrition/ food security, other INGOs for vocational training or housing projects).



#### D. Population Groups

The total 4,293 cases have been assisted or referred since the beginning of the year through PSN project majority of them are conflict induced IDPs (2,654; 62%) followed by Afghan assisted returnee (1333; 31%)<sup>4</sup>, local population (174; 4%). The PSN program exceptionally assisted also 80 spontaneous returnees, 7 natural disasters-induced IDPs and 45 returned IDPs.



<sup>4</sup> Amongst the assisted returnees, the majority returned in 2015 (22%), followed by returnees from 2016 (18%), 2012 (15%), 2014 (10%). In line with the return trends. Most of the returnees assisted as PSN returned from Pakistan (91.2%; 1,215), while lower number from Iran and from other countries (8.2%; 116).

### E. Declared living conditions of the approved cases

As far as the economic profile of the assisted and referred individuals, many of the PSN cases resulted to be individuals or members of families with no or very low income. This was put in direct relation to their specific needs, but at the same time it is a condition that also exacerbates the difficulties of the beneficiaries to find adequate coping strategies. 55% of the cases approved by Approval Committee had less than USD 50 per month and 38.5% of assisted and/or referred PSN cases reported to have no income<sup>5</sup>.

Living conditions of the PSN also varied, but largely reflected patterns of displacement and return. 45% of the assisted PSN were found living with in a relative's house, 34% of cases living in rented house, 9.4% were living in their own house, 8.6% were living under tent and the rest were found in public buildings.



PSN interventions/ Photo UNHCR-OHW 2016



<sup>5</sup> According to the Asia Foundation “Survey of the Afghan People – 2016” respondents reported an overall average monthly household income of AFN 10,949 (USD 165), with urban areas reporting higher incomes (AFN 14,284/USD 215) than Afghans living in rural areas (AFN 9,845/USD 148).[http://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2016\\_Survey-of-the-Afghan-People\\_full-survey.pdf](http://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2016_Survey-of-the-Afghan-People_full-survey.pdf)

