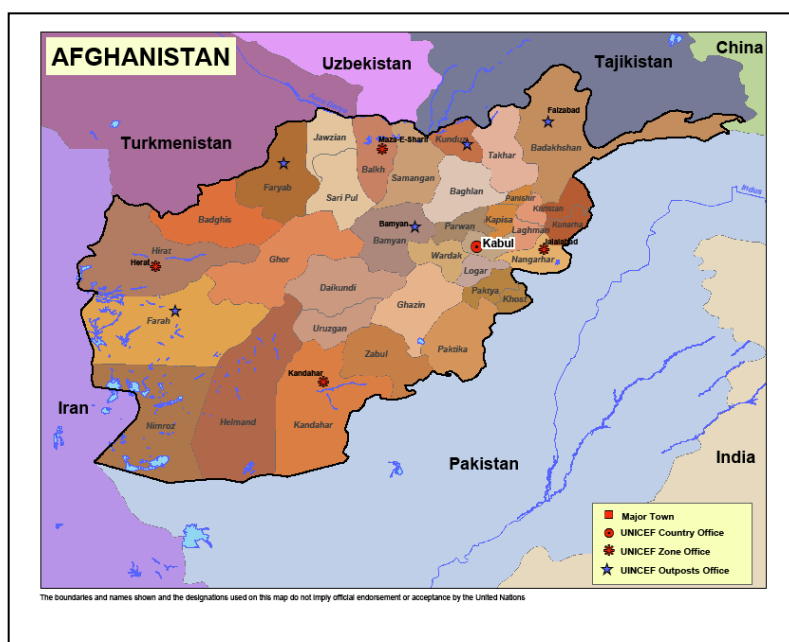


For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION AFGHANISTAN IN 2008



CORE COUNTRY DATA	
Population under 18	13982
Population under 5 (thousands)	5972
U5 mortality rate (2006)	257
Infant mortality rate (2006)	165
Maternal mortality ratio (2000-2006, reported)	1600
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	77
% population using improved drinking water sources (total)	39
% U5 suffering moderate and severe stunting	54

Sources: *The State of the World's Children 2008* and Ministry of Health/Centers for Disease Control.

Afghanistan is facing a variety of natural and man-made disasters across the country. Armed conflict, school burning, suicide attacks, and kidnapping and killing of humanitarian workers limit the access to civilian population and hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Influx of deportees/returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, population movements and natural disasters are the main phenomena. Approximately 2.4 million children and women will be assisted via the funds raised by UNICEF's *Humanitarian Action Report 2008*.

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2008	
Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	2,210,835
Water, sanitation and hygiene	2,434,298
Education	5,064,541
Child protection	674,314
Humanitarian response and coordination	2,541,776
Total*	12,925,764

* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Afghanistan had been in a state of complex emergency for over the past twenty years. The country's infrastructure and systems were largely destroyed. Although the security and stability have been gradually improving since 2002, armed conflict, sporadic security incidences and drought continue to threaten the welfare of Afghan people. An estimated 22 million Afghans live in poverty and substandard conditions. Over 100,000 people, most of them children and women, remain displaced by conflict and drought. Of a total of 4 million refugees, mostly in Iran and Pakistan, over 2 million returned during 2002 and 2003 and continue to return further straining overburdened social systems. More than half of the population is under the age of 18 years. This structure of the relatively young population has implications for the ability of the Government to deliver services, and calls for an urgent need to invest in children and women.

Afghanistan has a maternal mortality ratio of 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births which accounts as one of the highest in the world. The infant mortality rate is 165 per 1,000 live births, whereby one child out of every four does not survive his/her fifth birthday. Recurrent drought, chronic household food shortage and widespread inappropriate infant and young child feeding and caring practices have led to increased admissions of under-five children to therapeutic care centres over the last two years. Among under-five children, 7 per cent suffer from acute malnutrition and 54 per cent of them are chronically malnourished. The nutrition figures could be higher in the areas affected by conflict and drought, where access is denied and humanitarian services are difficult to deliver. Immunization coverage for DPT1, DPT3 and measles is estimated at 90, 77 and 68 per cent respectively. Whereas health services are available in 82 per cent of districts, there is a significant population without access to such services.

Two million primary school-aged children (60 per cent) are out of school, with an estimated 1.3 million of them being girls. As per Ministry of Education figures provided in 2006, 3,929 schools do not have buildings, 535 school buildings are damaged and 1,481 schools need additional classrooms; overall there are 2,219 schools which have useable buildings. Only 23 per cent of the entire population has access to safe drinking water. Access to sanitation facilities is as low as 12 per cent. School incidents and threats against students and teachers continue to terrorize education in Afghanistan. Thirty-seven attacks against schools, mainly torching schools and explosions were reported in all parts of the country during 2007 up to mid-August. Deliberate attacks on girl students and women teachers resulted in at least five deaths and six injuries. Education in the insecure areas is facing qualitative and quantitative challenges.

The security situation in the country is deteriorating; more areas have fallen into active military operation zones between the Government/Coalition forces and Anti-Government Elements (AGE), which hampers humanitarian operations and access to affected populations. As of May 2007, approximately 41 per cent of districts were inaccessible to the UN on a permanent/semi-permanent basis. The security situation in the southern, south-eastern and some eastern provinces is fragile. The situation for some western provinces reported alarming. In January 2007, 1,500 families were displaced in the southern province of Helmand as a result of armed conflict. Around 15,000 families were displaced due to the fighting in the south in the latter part of 2006. Civilians are victims of armed conflict on both sides and are allegedly used as human shields during conflict by AGE. According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 600 civilians have been killed in the military operations and suicide attacks up to June 2007 either by Government/Coalition forces or by AGE.

There are more than 2 million illegal Afghan migrants living in Iran and Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan is planning to close four Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, which is likely to result in an estimated 150,000 Afghans returning to Afghanistan. The anticipated influx of returnees and deportees certainly has grave implications for UNICEF's action in the affected areas, mainly the provision of basic services for children and their families as well as special protection measures for vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors and female-headed households.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

In close collaboration with local, national and international partners, UNICEF has continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of the population affected by natural and man-made disasters. Routine immunization has been badly affected in the conflict zones and several outbreaks of measles reported in 2007 particularly in southern Afghanistan. Measles and tetanus vaccination campaigns were conducted in the southern and western provinces; 396,192 children under the age of 12 and 177,981 women of childbearing age were vaccinated against measles and tetanus respectively.

Medical supplies, emergency health kits and oral rehydration salts (ORS) for 200,000 people were procured and dispatched to Zonal Offices for emergency preparedness and response. Supplies are being used for the victims of natural, man-made as well as disease outbreaks. The supplies will also cover the requirements for the winter 2007/2008. Sixteen care providers were trained in the management of severe childhood malnutrition in the southern provinces. Nutrition supplies for 2,000 malnourished children and micronutrient tablets for 5,000 pregnant women were delivered to provincial health departments in the southern region. So far, 395 malnourished children have been treated in the therapeutic feeding units and 65,496 kg of BP5 have been distributed, benefiting 219,780 under-five children and 43,956 pregnant women.

In the southern drought- and conflict-affected areas, 343 community water points were constructed, and in Panjwai district of Kandahar the construction of 200 handpump water points and 1,200 family latrines is in progress. Emergency supplies for 100 water points and 200 latrines in the south have been completed. An additional 300 community water points and a strategic water point are planned in the southern, western and northern drought-affected areas.

To ensure school functionality, over 4,000 students received emergency education supplies, in response to natural disasters and attacks on schools. Thirteen cost-effective schools were constructed in the northern provinces of Samangan and Baghlang. Over 6,240 students, particularly girls, benefited from this project. A national workshop on education in emergencies was conducted to address education concerns in emergencies, mainly in insecure areas. As a result, UNICEF is developing a psychosocial support package and has adapted the recreational kit contents for Afghanistan. The procurement of 1,000 recreational kits for 2008 is in progress.

In response to emergencies, UNICEF provided family kits (blankets, tarpaulin, hygiene and cooking utensils) and warm clothing (jackets) to 6,790 families affected by natural emergencies, to 9,044 internally displaced families affected by the conflict in the south and to 1,863 deported families in the west and south, covering a total population of about 123,879. Provision of non-food items complemented food assistance provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the contributions from other UN agencies, Government and Afghan Red Crescent Society as a single package. Procurement of non-food supplies for 45,000 families is in progress to assist internally displaced families in the south, families affected by natural disasters and those returning from Iran and Pakistan. A pandemic influenza simulation was conducted in UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office. The simulation revealed a number of gaps which are being addressed in order to strengthen emergency preparedness for avian/human influenza.

Two armoured vehicles were procured and will be deployed to Kandahar to support the monitoring of lifesaving interventions for women and children. This will help the office to comply with Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) and ensure staff safety during field trips.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2008

Coordination and partnership

Emergency response is coordinated by the Government of Afghanistan, through its Emergency Response Commission, incorporating line ministries. The UN system support is provided through this Commission, along with NGO inputs and coordinated by the UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA). A Combined Disaster Management Team (CDMT), consisting of UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities, is tasked with practical implementation of emergency response and reports to the Commission.

Regular programme

Emergency preparedness and response activities are fully integrated into the main programme sectors of the UNICEF Country Programme 2006-2008. In addition to mainstream support to national and area-based capacity-building, each programme sector is also responsible for ensuring that a humanitarian response element is included in its annual work plan to support the development of emergency response capacity and management among government counterparts.

Health and nutrition (US\$ 2,210,835)

Some 600,000 vulnerable children among the displaced, returnee host communities and impoverished will benefit from the following key activities:

- Distribute essential emergency drugs and equipment to 200,000 population, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and drought-affected areas through health centres and mobile clinics;
- Continue assessment, technical support and provision of nutritional supplies to therapeutic feeding centres previously established and run by partners for 2,000 severely malnourished children;
- Provide multiple micronutrients for 90,000 pregnant and lactating women and vitamin A for 40,000 post-partum women only;
- Administer vitamin A to 100,000 internally displaced and drought-affected children;
- Vaccinate against measles 100,000 children, particularly IDPs, returnees and children affected by natural and man-made disasters;
- Provide rapid response to diarrhoeal and acute respiratory disease outbreaks with a planning figure of 200,000 children in high-risk areas.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (US\$ 2,434,298)

Some 1 million IDPs, returnee families and drought-affected communities, focusing particularly on children and women, will be reached through the following key activities:

- Provide water purification tablets at household level for 10,000 families;
- Support water tankering for a population of 150,000 in the returnees' concentrated townships and communities affected by drought;
- Chlorinate 10,000 wells in high-risk areas;
- Construct 1,000 sanitary household latrines for IDPs and returnees;
- Construct five roof water harvesting systems for five schools in drought-affected areas of northern and western regions;
- Repair 2,000 water points in drought-affected areas, mainly in schools;
- Promote hygiene education and hygiene awareness programmes amongst 10,000 families, schools and surrounding local communities;
- Construct and repair piped water systems in drought- and flood-affected areas;
- Provide 60,000 collapsible water jerrycans to IDPs and families affected by natural and man-made disasters.

Education (US\$ 5,064,541)

A total of 550,000 children will benefit from the following key activities:

- Construct 305 cost-effective schools/classrooms in remote areas for 20,000 children with possible community contribution;
- Procure teaching/learning materials and teacher support for 20,000 primary school-aged children, including IDPs and returnees;
- Procure/distribute teaching/learning supplies and set up temporary learning spaces for 10,000 children;
- Provide psychosocial support to traumatized and war-affected children through schools;
- Provide IDP/deportee (adolescent) girls' education and promote community intervention in the western region.

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION REPORT 2008

Child protection (US\$ 674,314)

Children affected by armed conflict and natural disasters are targeted through the following key activities:

- Create child-friendly play areas for children in the IDP/deportee concentrated areas and for children affected by armed conflict and natural disasters;
- Strengthen monitoring of child rights violations and abuse through existing Child Protection Action Networks;
- Support community-based psychosocial/child-friendly corners in the IDP/deportee concentrated areas (activities will cover setting up the places, training volunteers/teachers/peer educators and developing relevant materials);
- Undertake mine-risk awareness programmes with special focus on training of peers, implementation of community-based interventions, advocacy and materials development;
- Trace and reunite separated children in the event of natural and man-made disasters.

Humanitarian response and coordination (US\$ 2,541,776)

In coordination with the Government/UN emergency preparedness and response mechanism, UNICEF will preposition relevant supplies in its Zonal Offices and other strategic locations. This will cover 30,000 families with a standard package of family kits, tarpaulins, jerrycans, blankets and warm clothing for women and children. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNAMA, will support disaster risk reduction trainings at community level.