



Awareness raising session on hygiene, Covid-19 and GBV in Lalpoora District, Nangarhar Province © Christian Aid

Afghanistan Crisis Appeal

12-month Update Report, December 2022

Thank you for supporting the Christian Aid Afghanistan Crisis Appeal, which we launched together with the Disasters Emergency Committee in December 2021. After four decades of war in Afghanistan, the compound effect of climate change induced drought, Covid-19 related economic disruption and the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, created a complex humanitarian crisis. Economic collapse sent food prices soaring, saw 95% of households experience food insecurity and put 20 million people in desperate need of food support. Vulnerable families were also struggling to fulfil other basic needs, including proper shelter, drinking water and hygiene.

Over the last 12 months, our Afghanistan team has partnered with local NGOs Afghans for Tomorrow (A4T), Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Relief (OCHR) and Afghanistan Development Association (ADA) to deliver life-saving relief in Kabul, Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunduz and Paktika provinces. Immediate needs were met through the provision of food and high-energy nutrition packages, hygiene kits and cash support. Attitudinal change to WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), gender-based violence and nutrition was delivered through community awareness raising sessions, radio messages, posters, and leaflets, all translated into local languages.

In addition to our humanitarian response on the ground, Christian Aid has been highly active in national and international advocacy. We have sought to maintain awareness of the ongoing crisis among both donor governments and the public, and to ease the movement of funds into the country despite economic sanctions against the Taliban government.



Our emergency response

Our partners began by conducting in-depth needs assessments, in close coordination with local government, shura (community councils) and community members, to identify the most vulnerable households. Women and girls, people living with disabilities, those with underlying health conditions, Internally Displaced People (IDPs), and the socially excluded were prioritised.

Christian Aid humanitarian responses always seek to ensure that the most marginalised have a voice, through community participation in the programme design and implementation, and through our complaints and feedback mechanisms. Community meetings and inception workshops ensured participants were well informed about the projects, the selection criteria, and the expected standards of behaviour of Christian Aid and partner staff.

Our response to date has focused on five outcome goals, across which a wide range of activities have been completed by our partners in Kabul, Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunduz provinces:

Outcome 1: Improved nutrition and food security amongst vulnerable households.

- **5,800** food packages to households who were identified as women headed or with a high number of dependent members, and as having no definite access to cash and food. These included flour, rice, cooking oil, pulses, sugar, and salt.
- **2,450** high energy emergency nutrition packages distributed to pregnant or lactating women and malnourished under-fives, to build the resilience of at-risk children.



(Left) Community level coordination meeting with women in Chaparhar District, Nangarhar Province, to identify project participants, led by a female member of staff. (Right) Participant identification during door-to-door community assessments, also in Chaparhar District.

Outcome 2: Improved knowledge and practices amongst communities that help prevent the spread of Covid-19 and other WASH-related diseases.

- **8,100** hygiene and dignity kits distributed to vulnerable households containing soap, shampoo, jerry cans, sanitary pads, toothbrushes, toothpaste, towels and Covid-19 factsheets.
- **136** community level awareness raising sessions conducted on hygiene promotion and Covid-19 prevention.
- **250,000** people reached with awareness-raising messaging on hygiene and Covid-19 via local radio stations.

Outcome 3: Improved knowledge and attitudes on gender-based violence (GBV) to help prevent GBV cases in target communities.

- 136 community level awareness raising sessions completed on women's rights and GBV prevention.
- Approximately **250,000** people reached with awareness raising on women's rights via local radio stations. Now that the Taliban are in government, local media are not allowed to broadcast specific messages on GBV. Our partner therefore adapted their approach and managed to broadcast messages elaborating on women's rights through the teachings of Islam.



Awareness raising session on hygiene, Covid-19 and GBV with men in Lalpoor district, Nangarhar Province.

Outcome 4: Improved protection against the harsh winter in Kabul province.

- 550 vulnerable households provided with cash to purchase winterisation supplies, which include warm blankets and clothes.

Outcome 5: Crisis affected communities are able to provide feedback and complaints.

- 17 Community Accountability Assessments conducted across the target provinces.
- 256 pieces of feedback and complaints received via various channels, including our dedicated digital community accountability system, COMPASS. Each complaint is investigated.



Community Accountability Assessment with pregnant and lactating women in Goshta district, Nangarhar Province.

In 2023, we are aiming to reach a further 66,000 people with food and high energy nutrition packages, hygiene kits, awareness raising sessions and cash assistance for winterisation supplies and to support livelihoods (by enabling the purchase of poultry and home gardening packages).

Farida's story

Currently, over half a million people in Nangarhar Province in Eastern Afghanistan are at risk of famine, approximately a quarter of the population. Behsud District is one of the most populous districts, and with high numbers of internally displaced people due to the conflict. Communities in Behsud District are faced with few economic opportunities and shortages of food and fuel.





Farida, three of her children, and her husband.

Farida and her family are displaced from neighbouring Kunar Province and now live in the Behsud District. She has seven children, but her husband is unable to find work. They had been struggling, unsure how they would buy food, warmer clothes, vital medicine, or fuel.

In February 2022 Farida received a food package and hygiene kits. During a monitoring visit later in the year, she told our partner: *“The assistance was very useful in saving us from the danger of food insecurity, but these assistances must be sustained in order to save our lives due to the food shortages and current economic crisis.”*

June 2022 Earthquake Response

In June 2022, a powerful earthquake hit Afghanistan’s Paktika and Khost provinces, killing at least 1,000 people and injuring over 1,500. This put yet further strain on a very weakened state. Appeal funds were allocated to one of our long-term partners, OCHR (Organisation for the Coordination of Humanitarian Relief), who stepped in to provide targeted support to those most affected.

OCHR delivered a 45-day rapid response to those most affected by the earthquake in Paktika Province, who were not being reached by other aid agencies. The main objective was to give vulnerable households cash for hygiene needs, food, and shelter repairs in Gayan and Barmal Districts. Each family received the equivalent of £100 in Afghani (the local currency) and **a total of 780 vulnerable families received cash assistance**, including female-led and low-income households, large households with poor accommodation, the elderly, disabled, children and the chronically ill or malnourished.



Cash distribution in the Gayan District of Paktika Province.

The OCHR team conducted awareness-raising sessions for project participants at both cash distribution points. These sessions raised awareness of gender-based violence and advised the communities how best to use the multipurpose cash they received, with suggestions spend it on food and clean water, improving family hygiene, shelter repairs, safe practices to reduce the spread of Covid-19, and cholera prevention. The team also raised awareness of the likelihood of aftershocks and disseminated life-saving messages, such as advising people to move to open spaces should these occur).

Community and faith leaders were encouraged to take an active role in the dissemination of key messages from the sessions, and to commit to raising awareness of women’s, girls’, and children’s rights from an Islamic perspective. **Over 3,200 women and 11,800 men were directly reached through this work.**



Global Advocacy

We successfully advocated, at both the UN and UK Government level, for a humanitarian exemption to the international sanctions placed on Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover, to enable the movement of funding into the country. In Resolution 2615, made on 22nd December 2021, the Security Council decided that 'humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs in Afghanistan are not a violation' of the Taliban sanctions regime asset freeze.

The Christian Aid Advocacy, Finance, and Programmes Teams then played an important role in ensuring that the UK Government's application of the exemption would follow the letter and spirit of that which was proposed by the UN. A flurry of last-minute activity, including a joint private briefing to MPs organized by the British & Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), and multiple private letters led by Christian Aid to government ministers, helped to ensure the situation was resolved satisfactorily, in what we consider a major win.

Our Head of Asia and the Middle East, Ray Hasan, has attended regular meetings with Nigel Casey, a Director at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. He continues to update the FCDO, who have no presence on the ground, about the situation that operational actors and communities are facing and to push the FCDO to take a more strategic approach in their dealings with Afghanistan. This includes stressing the need for support for civic space, hunger, women's rights, and the expansion of sanctions regime exemptions to allow for work beyond pure humanitarian response.

In August 2022, working through our partners, Christian Aid facilitated the collection of stories about how Afghan families are coping with difficult economic conditions and hunger, which [appeared as a feature](#) in The Telegraph. This was a success in a challenging environment in which the attention of the media and donor governments has focused hugely on the war in Ukraine.



Patrick Watt and Ray Hasan meeting partner staff in Nangarhar

In September 2022, Christian Aid Chief Executive Officer Patrick Watt, accompanied by Head of Asia and the Middle East Ray Hasan, travelled to Afghanistan to visit our programmes and partners. They also met with the heads of UN agencies, and local and international NGOs to discuss the operating context and analyse the advocacy and programme opportunities for the coming year.

Your generous donations have enabled Christian Aid and our partners to deliver this life-saving humanitarian response. Thank you for bringing hope to vulnerable people in Afghanistan, like Farida and her family.

