



Research Brief

Durable Solutions Analysis, Jalalabad/Nangarhar

August 2024

Introduction

Why this brief?

The Asia Displacement Solutions Platform (ADSP) is a joint initiative of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) which works to contribute to the development of comprehensive solutions for displaced populations in Asia. Established in 2017, ADSP focuses on research initiatives to build an evidence base for its members and other humanitarian actors to facilitate joint advocacy and common understanding around durable solutions. Since 2022, Samuel Hall, a research organisation founded and based in Kabul, has been working with ADSP to build on existing data collected by members to create a space for research and advocacy on durable solutions.

The aim of this research brief is to go beyond data mapping on durable solutions to incorporate data sources from ADSP members, Samuel Hall, IOM and OCHA data, within a durable solutions analysis framework developed by the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) in the East and Horn of Africa. The research brief focuses on the specific context of Jalalabad and surrounding areas in Nangarhar, which is home to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees,¹ especially from Pakistan. Understanding city level data provides ways forward to fill in data gaps in support of durable solutions programming.

Context

As a result of official decision by the Government of Pakistan, from September 15th, 2023 to May 18th, 2024, close to 589,720 Afghan nationals returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan.² 89% of those who reportedly returned voluntarily cited fear of arrest as the reason for their return.³

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data shows that Nangarhar, Jalalabad and its surrounding areas, are among the primary destinations for many of the returnees from Pakistan.⁴ From September 15th, 2023 to May 18th, 2024, 29% of returnees had for intended province of destination Nangarhar, just behind Kandahar with 30%.⁵ Given Nangarhar's proximity to Pakistan, it is a primary destination for returnees going through the Torkham crossing.

According to UNDP, the Afghan economy has had a "27 percent contraction since 2020, and nearly 7 out of 10 Afghans lack access to the most basic items, opportunities and services needed for subsistence-level living conditions."⁶ The influx of Afghan returnee populations from Pakistan join already saturated urban and rural areas of the province, especially in terms of access to services and protection⁷ for both IDP and host populations. "IOM estimates that there were some 100,000 IDPs living in Jalalabad city in late 2022,"⁸ but the total number of IDPs and returnees is unknown since these are often difficult to track.

The conditions in Afghanistan and in Pakistan have created a complex humanitarian crisis that involves physical, legal and material safety concerns, oftentimes exacerbated based on displacement status. **The current situation highlights the urgent need for inclusive urban solutions in Jalalabad.** Limited access to basic services, limited economic opportunities, along with new influx of returnees, and the resumption of forced evictions of IDPs makes it difficult for displaced populations to rebuild their lives, support their families, and integrate. Moreover, this research brief examines women's livelihood, education and empowerment, given the historical vulnerabilities women face in Afghanistan but also because of the many restrictions imposed on them.

Local integration is frequently overlooked by governments and policy makers, who favour return to areas of origin as the preferred solution.⁹ The 2010 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions provided guidelines for local integration, alongside resettlement in a third location, as the primary pathways to achieving durable solutions.¹⁰ Since then, the Report of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement clearly articulated that "States and other actors must put an end to treating return as the inherently best or only option".¹¹ Following on this report, the UN Secretary General's Action



¹ In the context of this paper, returnee refers to "persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border." IOM, Glossary on migration, International Migration Law, 2019. See also the similar definition provided in [UNHCR's master glossary of terms](#).

² UNHCR/IOM, UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #20, May 2024

³ Ibid

⁴ IOM DTM, Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Snapshot (24-31 March 2024), April 2024

⁵ UNHCR/IOM, UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #20, May 2024. Until April 2024, Nangarhar was the primary province of destination for returnees from Pakistan

⁶ UNDP, Two years in review, Changes in Afghan Economy, Households and Cross-Cutting Sectors (August 2021 to August 2023), January 2023

⁷ UNHCR, Protection Interventions for Afghan Returnees from Pakistan April 2024 to December 2025, May 2024

⁸ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, Protracted displacement in an urban world, research consortium, September 2023

⁹ ADSP/Samuel Hall, ADSP Briefing Note: Local Integration for IDPs in Kandahar? Insights from the field, April 2023

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Report of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A vision for the Future, 2021

Agenda on Internal Displacement¹² emphasised the need to go beyond internal displacement to take on a whole-of-displacement approach, also considering the rights and needs of individuals who fled across international borders, individuals who returned after cross-border displacement and host communities. Finally, the recent IASC independent review of the humanitarian response¹³ speaks of the critical need to look at other solutions beyond returns and at centring the response on greater participation, information sharing and awareness raising, including among the displaced populations. As a result, this brief reviews existing evidence on key dimensions and criteria identified by these frameworks, which are foundational to durable solutions analyses. By documenting where information exists and where the gaps lay, it is the objective of this research brief to present areas for consolidated efforts and joint data collection on durable solutions in Afghanistan.¹⁴

Research Methodology

Theme	Questions
Local Integration	What are the living conditions in the informal IDP settlements in Jalalabad? What are the challenges and obstacles to local integration in Jalalabad, Nangarhar?
Durable Solutions	What are existing data that can be used to shape durable solutions analyses? Are returns to areas of origin seen as the only viable durable solution for displacement? How can achievement of durable solutions be supported?

This brief is based on data collected between 2021 and 2024 across Jalalabad and Nangarhar by a range of stakeholders. These reports and datasets were shared by the respective agencies for the specific purpose of informing this brief. ADSP and Samuel Hall extend their gratitude to all the agencies and organisations for their collaboration and for granting permission to use these valuable resources to inform a common understanding of durable solutions.

- **OCHA MRAT dataset (1,528 interviews in Jalalabad, January 2024):** this dataset offers a recent snapshot of the varying needs of returnees across different dimensions. 78% of the participants returned to Afghanistan within the past three months, and an additional 18% within three to six months prior. A majority (69%) plan to remain in Jalalabad.
- **UN-Habitat vulnerability assessment profiles in collaboration with UNHCR (116,652 individuals across seven sites):** The focus of this data is on IDP informal settlements. The Department for Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) helped select seven IDP sites for the survey, which reports a total population of 116,652 individuals across 19,302 households, including a 27% returnee demographic. This brief relies on data from the summary report rather than the full dataset.
- **IOM DTM's Rapid Returnee Assessment in the province of Nangarhar (228 returnees, December 2024):** this phone survey gathered insights on returnees' immediate needs, access to services, migration background and intentions. The majority (85%) had re-entered Afghanistan through the Torkham crossing, and the remaining 15% through the Chaman/Spin Boldak crossing in Kandahar.
- **REACH – Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA), Multi-Sectoral Assessment (2023).**
- **DRC protection monitoring:** Other data sources consulted include those focusing on protection monitoring and border protection in the eastern region.
- **ARRNA Durable Solutions Desk Review (2023)** by the World Bank based on IOM and UNHCR data sources, offering critical insights and quantitative information to inform the durable solutions analysis presented in this brief.
- **Samuel Hall Protracted Displacement in an Urban World Study (PDUW) data (2021-22):** This dataset, spanning a broad set of indicators, was collected in two phases: pre- and post-regime change in 2021 and 2022. Focusing specifically on the Jalalabad Majboorabad area, it covered 360 displaced and 180 host community households.¹⁵
- **IOM/UNICEF/UNHCR/UNWOMEN/Technical Working Group data (2022):** A dataset, collected by Samuel Hall via random dialler in the fall of 2022 for the "Documentation and Legal Identification in Afghanistan". This data provided insights into the documentation and legal identification challenges faced.
- **World Bank / Samuel Hall energy study (ongoing):** key findings were summarised from a brief on the link between energy and displacement for which a random dialler survey targeted 1,166 respondents across Afghanistan, in an effort to understand durable solutions through the prism of access to energy for Afghan households.

The ReDSS Durable Solutions Framework Adapted to Afghanistan

The research team used the above data and applied the existing Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) Solutions Framework,¹⁶ with adaptations to reflect the Afghan context. Among these changes, a new sub-criterion on access to energy sources was added.

Affirming that the three solutions (voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement) are processes to achieve integration, ReDSS operationalised the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions to develop the ReDSS Solutions Framework for displacement-affected communities. The ReDSS Solutions Framework is a rapid analytical tool that offers a snapshot in time to assess the extent to which durable solutions for displaced populations have been achieved in a particular context. Building on this framework provides guidance to ADSP and its members on durable solutions monitoring in Afghanistan.

¹² United Nations, Action Agenda on Internal Displacement – Follow-up on the Report of the UN SG's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, 2022

¹³ ODI/HPG, Independent Review of the Humanitarian Response to Internal Displacement, 2024

¹⁴ ADSP/Samuel Hall, ADSP Briefing Note: Local Integration for IDPs in Kandahar? Insights from the field, p.5, April 2023

¹⁵ Barratt, S. et al, Afghanistan's unfolding crisis: wellbeing and livelihoods of displaced people before and after the regime change, IIED and Samuel Hall, 2024

¹⁶ ReDSS Durable solutions framework, 2017 <https://www.regionaldss.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ReDSS-Framework-One-Page-Narrative.pdf>

There are three criteria – Physical, Material and Legal safety – and 10 sub-criteria to assess whether a population has achieved or is on track to achieving a durable solution. These criteria reflect the existing eight IASC criteria. The data is plugged into the framework, and, with a traffic light system, each indicator reveals the status of progress to achieve durable solutions.

	The indicator is met or well on the way to being met. Displaced populations experience similar or better conditions than the host community and international/national standards (if applicable) are met.
	The indicator has not fully been met and obstacles exist. Conditions are inferior to the host community and international/national standards (if applicable).
	The indicator is far from met. The situation for displaced populations is significantly worse than that of surrounding communities, and national/international standards (if applicable) are not met.
	No data is available for this indicator or some data exists but it is incomplete.

Limitations: Two variables are needed to inform the rating: 1) a comparison between the situation of IDPs/Returnees (displaced population) and that of the host community, 2) a comparison of the situation with national and international standards, where such standards exist. In the Afghan context, given the lack of current, up-to-date data on the general population, such comparisons are, today, not available quantitatively, but qualitative information was used for comparisons.

Key Highlights on Local Integration

Physical Safety

Protection	Percentage of displaced populations who have suffered violent crimes or experienced safety incidents, including sexual and gender-based violence in the last 6 months	Percentage of displaced populations who do not face more discriminatory or arbitrary restriction of their freedom of movement based on their displacement status
Safety and Security	Percentage of displaced populations who have adequate access to police and judiciary, when needed	Percentage of displaced populations feeling safe in their current place of residence
Social Cohesion	Percentage of displaced populations who do not face any form of stigmatisation (verbal violence, insults, exclusion, etc.) in their current place of residence	Percentage of displaced populations feeling they are accepted in the community where they live

Material Safety

Adequate Standard of Living Access to basic and social services	Percentage of displaced populations with food consumption comparable to local population and as per international/national standards	Prevalence of GAM ¹⁷ /SAM ¹⁸ among IDPs/returnees compared to resident population and as per national/international standards
	Percentage of displaced populations with adequate access to potable water, sanitation and hygiene	Percentage of displaced populations with adequate access to health care
	Percentage of displaced populations children with adequate access to formal education	Percentage of displaced populations who have adequate access to safety net interventions or receive remittances from abroad
	Percentage of displaced populations who have adequate access to energy solution and sources	
Access to Livelihoods (Job creation and income generation)	Percentage of displaced populations who face legal or administrative obstacles to employment or economic activity	Percentage of unemployed people among displaced populations
	Percentage of displaced populations who have access to sustainable employment conditions	Poverty levels among displaced populations

¹⁷ Global Acute Malnutrition

¹⁸ Severe Acute Malnutrition

Housing, Land & Property (HLP)	Percentage of displaced populations with adequate housing (not overcrowded housing/ shelter and/or precarious structure and/or at risk of sudden eviction)	Existence of effective and accessible mechanisms to ensure access to land and/or secure tenure
	Percentage of displaced populations with lost HLP who have had their claims resolved	Percentage of displaced populations who have secured the right to housing, land and property

Legal Safety

Access to Effective Remedies & Justice	Percentage of displaced populations who consider that violations suffered have been effectively remedied and a sense of justice restored, compared to local population	Existence of accessible mechanisms that have the legal mandate and actual capacity to provide displaced populations with effective remedies for violations suffered
	Percentage of displaced populations who accessed formal or informal/traditional justice mechanisms	
Participation in public affairs	Displaced populations face no legal or administrative obstacles that prevent them from voting, being elected or working in public service	Percentage of displaced populations participating in community or social organizations (youth / women / environmental / sports groups and others)
	Percentage of displaced populations involved in public decision making processes, or local reconciliation/confidence-building initiatives	
Access to Documentation	Existence and effective accessibility of mechanisms to obtain/replace documents for displaced populations bearing in mind the local context	Percentage of displaced populations without birth certificates, national ID cards or other personal documents relevant to the local context
Family Reunification	The number of unaccompanied and separated displaced populations children for whom a best interest determination is needed but has not been conducted	Accessible and efficient mechanisms have been put in place to reunite displaced populations separated family members
	The number of displaced populations children or other dependent persons who have not yet been reunited with their families relative to total displaced population size	

Physical Safety

Social cohesion

Data on social cohesion is broadly lacking in current survey-based data collection, however, qualitative and anecdotal evidence point to a lack of cohesion and a lack of integration – when discussing both new and protracted displacement situations.

Sources of tensions: In discussions held during participatory planning forums¹⁹ in Jalalabad, in July 2023, the host populations were concerned about IDPs occupying strategic and green areas, congesting the city, and saturating available resources.²⁰ As a result, the municipality expressed concerns about implementing its strategic plan to address the needs of the hosts and the displaced, due to a lack of support from the host population. NRC's 2024 rapid protection assessment found that, while on a general basis host and displaced communities have good entente, disparities in provision of aid between host and displaced population were a source of tension in a context where displaced populations were more likely to receive aid. Moreover, certain respondents alleged that there were discriminations and reticence from the host community about access of displaced children to government schools. Certain members of the host population believed that government schools should only be accessed by members of the host population.²¹

Many of the displaced (internal or returnees from abroad) in Jalalabad come from rural communities in Afghanistan, and are unfamiliar with urban culture. As such, facilitating awareness is essential to help them understand how to live harmoniously with diverse populations²² along with supporting reintegration and social cohesion, which is crucial to foster coexistence and prevent further deterioration and marginalisation of the displaced within Jalalabad. Yet, in the current context, there are important limitations for awareness raising or even peacebuilding activities, making the provision of these services much more difficult.²³

¹⁹ Organised by Samuel Hall between 2020 and 2023, as part of the *Protracted Displacement in an Urban World* project, the Participatory Forums in Jalalabad brought together experts representing the authorities, community groups, the private sector, aid agencies/NGOs, and IDPs and returnees, and host communities.

²⁰ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Participatory Forum Jalalabad/City note, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, July 2023

²¹ NRC, Rapid Protection Assessment of People Returning from Pakistan, Nangarhar, January 2024

²² GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Participatory Forum Jalalabad/City note, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, July 2023

²³ NRC, Rapid Protection Assessment of People Returning from Pakistan, Nangarhar, January 2024

Marginalisation, discrimination, and stigmatisation: Based on data from the Protracted Displacement in an Urban World Study, IDP women in the outskirts of Jalalabad, expressed being marginalised due to poverty, with some attributing this to their IDP status. Another reason was rooted in the lack of family ties or land ownership, rather than about the status itself. Unlike women, interviewed men did not mention poverty affecting social relations similarly.

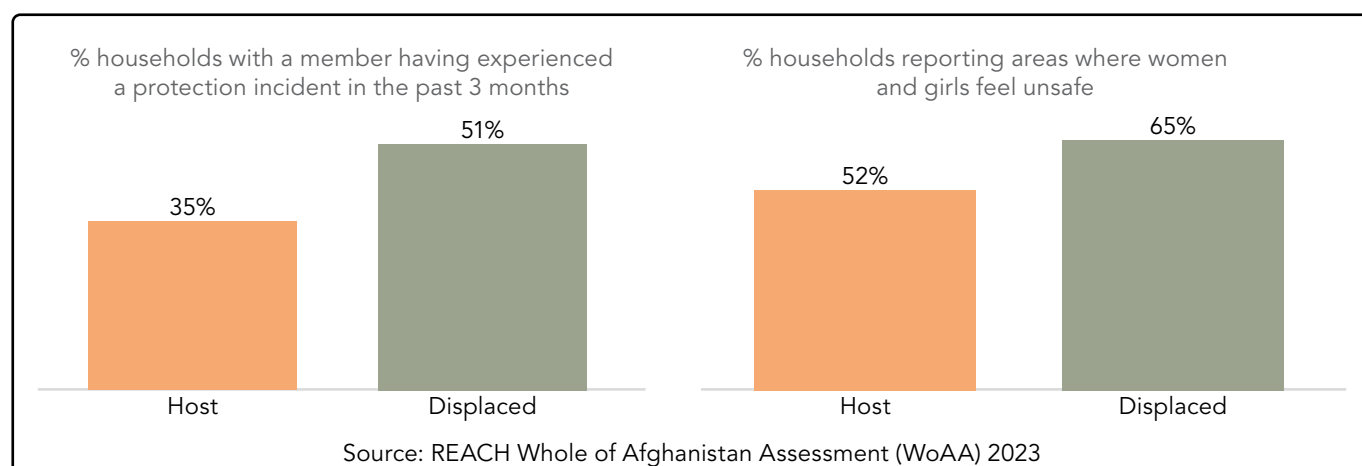
As the displaced are increasingly marginalised, perceptions gradually become negative against them. Consequently, their access to basic services, livelihoods, and aid, can potentially diminish due to increased likelihood of discrimination. It is important to change the perceptions towards the displaced, especially in this current context of returns, to prevent the displaced in Jalalabad from becoming pariahs as seen in other contexts.²⁴

Pressure by the authorities for IDPs to return to their areas of origin: The official focus on returns makes the displaced less likely to form bonds and to integrate within Jalalabad. Looming and past evictions, combined with current vulnerabilities cause a disruption of social networks, the dispersal of IDP communities and the loss of support systems.²⁵ Such pressures often force the displaced to go into hiding and adopt negative coping strategies pushing them in vicious cycles of precariousness and poverty.

The MRAT dataset from Jalalabad, predominantly consisting of recent returnees, indicates a relative sense of security, with 86% reporting no instances of abuse or violence. Physical violence was reported by 5% of respondents. When compared to host population data, REACH data showed that displaced populations were more likely to have experienced safety incidents, including sexual and gender-based violence, compared to the resident population. 50.9 % of displaced households had expressed having a member which had experienced a protection incident in the past 3 months, compared to 35.1% of host populations. Along the same lines, displaced households were seen as 15% more likely to be living in areas where women and girls feel unsafe. However, protection data such as data on gender-based violence (GBV), might be underestimating the real numbers as they are often difficult to gather given the sensitivity of the issue and the reticence of participants to share. DRC analysis found that, while only a few incidents were reported, risk of child sexual abuses were widespread, and especially increased for children engaging in child labour, including activities such as collecting leaves and firewood in the forest or garbage on the streets.²⁶ These risks are present both within the host and displaced populations.

In certain cases, male heads of households are detained in Pakistan and the rest of the family members have to return on their own. This not only increases odds of protection issues on the return route, but also at destination. Moreover, given restrictions on women's movement and rights, such as employment, children are more likely to be put to work at a young age. Among displaced populations, especially those that have been displaced for longer, child work ranges from a few hours after school to full dedication in poorer families. Women often make use of their children to sell their products outside of their home, and minors are also paid for small tasks in workshops and other businesses, like getting customers for rickshaw drivers.²⁷ Additionally, according to MRAT movement restrictions and child labour are present at rates of 2% and 1%, respectively.

The statistics in this sub-section are significant when juxtaposed with findings from the IOM rapid returnee assessment, where a substantial percentage of respondents (20%) expressed the need for more information regarding safety and security. During fieldwork at the Torkham crossing, returnees indicated lacking the necessary information to safeguard themselves beyond immediate emergency assistance. One female returnee mentioned seeing information on social media about receiving support, but then felt unsure about what to trust. Returnees expressed a lack of information or concrete plans for their situation.²⁸ Key Informants interviewed in Jalalabad informal settlements (ISETs), as part of NRC protection monitoring study also indicated that the main reason for the lack of access to services was mostly due to a lack of awareness and information. It is estimated that many of the protection risks that are threatening the population of Jalalabad are likely to increase as returns increase.²⁹



²⁴ See ADSP/Samuel Hall, [Local Integration for IDPs in Kandahar? Insights from the field](#), April 2023

²⁵ NRC, Rapid Protection Assessment of People Returning from Pakistan, Nangarhar, January 2024

²⁶ DRC, Internal Report, 2023

²⁷ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

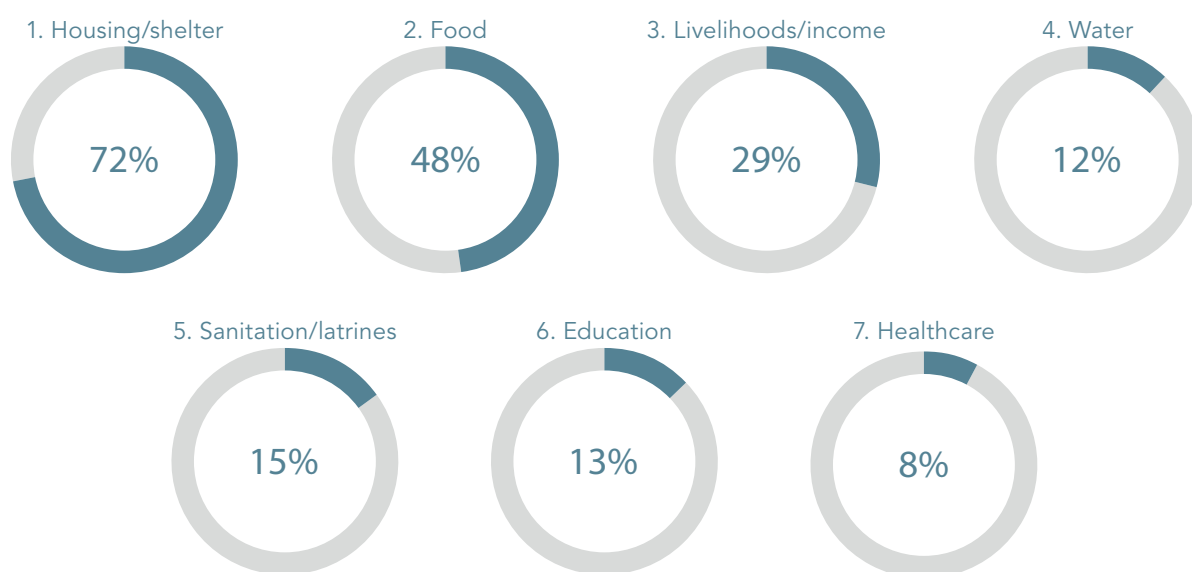
²⁸ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024

²⁹ National Durable Solutions Working Group (N-DSWG) meeting, March 2024.

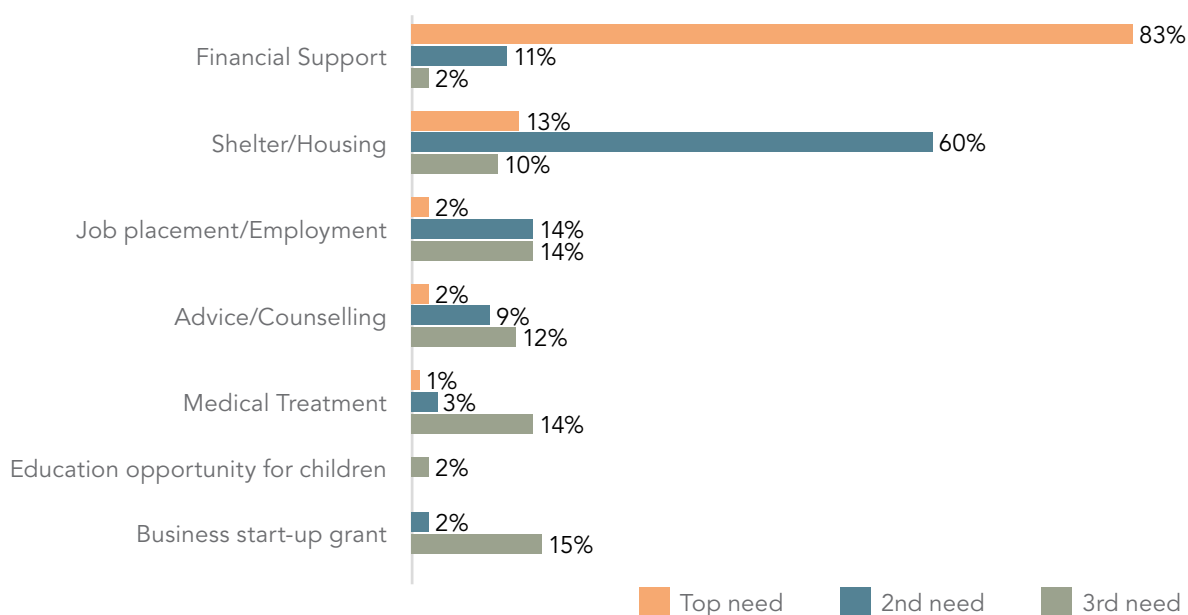
Material Safety

Material safety emerges as a primary concern among returnees, as reflected in the data collected by IOM. Shelter stands out as the most pressing need for returnees, with an alarming 72% reporting difficulty accessing housing/shelter and 65% reporting shelter-related concerns among the top 3 priority needs of their households. This is followed by difficulty accessing food for 48% of respondents in Nangarhar, and 61% naming food security challenges as the most pressing needs of their households. Nearly half, 45%, report facing obstacles in securing livelihoods. Despite some differences due to varying questionnaires and samples, the self-reported priority needs of current returnees—Financial Support ranking first, followed by Housing, Land, and Property (HLP), and then jobs — provided by the World Bank ARRNA review³⁰ are closely aligned with the results from IOM. It can safely be assumed that the returnees' needs will directly impact the durable solutions within Jalalabad and will influence the IASC criteria when compared to the needs of the host population, or national averages.

% respondents experiencing difficulty in the following areas (IOM DTM 2023):



Self reported priority needs - current returns (Source ARNNA, World Bank 2024)



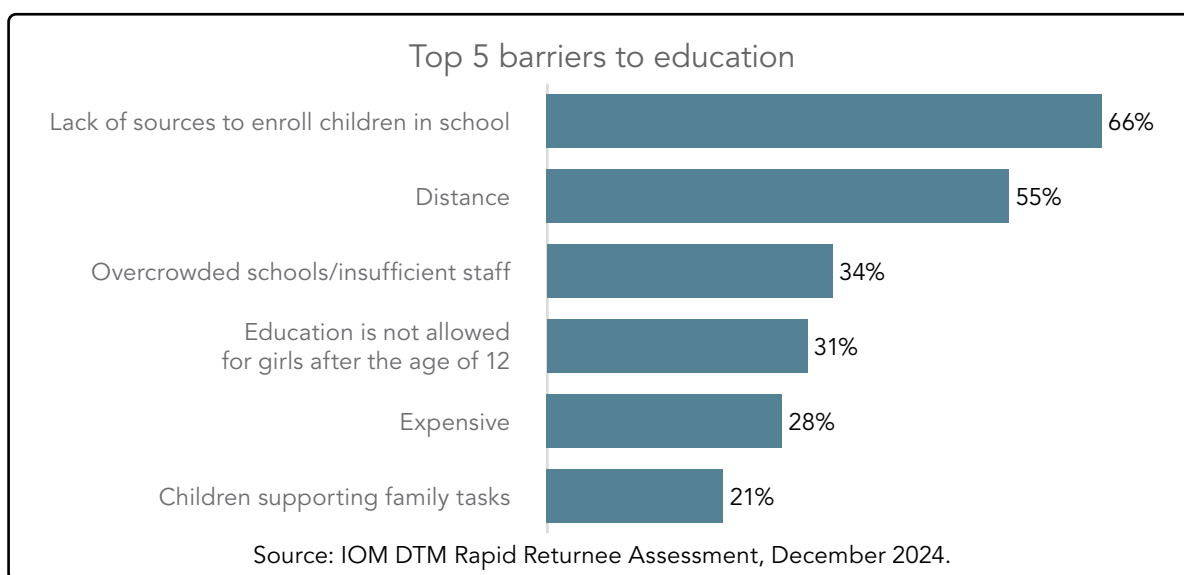
³⁰ World Bank, ARRNA Durable Solutions Desk Review by the World Bank, based on IOM and UNHCR data sources, January 2024

Education

Displaced and returnee children generally have less access to education compared to host community children.³¹ According to the MRAT data, 86% of families who have been in Afghanistan for less than three months report that their children aged 6 to 17 are not enrolled in school. This trend persists among those who arrived 3-6 months earlier, with 85% reporting the same. This lack of school attendance extends to community-based education and accelerated learning programs, affecting over 80% of both cohorts. The primary barriers cited for this are financial constraints (28%) and the absence of necessary documentation (41%).

This challenge occurs in spite of the availability of educational facilities, as highlighted by UN HABITAT's data suggesting a range of school facilities near informal settlements in Jalalabad. The data indicates the existence of a variety of schools, including government boys and girls high schools, suggesting that the infrastructure for education exists. However, the "None of the above" responses indicate there are still gaps in accessing these educational services for a significant portion of the population.

The data reflects a significant presence of government schools, which might indicate efforts by previous and current authorities to provide education.³² However, answers to surveys point towards gaps in access to educational facilities for a considerable number of individuals, which may need to be addressed to ensure that all children and youth have access to education. IOM's findings corroborate the financial hurdle as a major barrier to education for returnee families.



Moreover, "the influx of undocumented returns from Pakistan in late 2023 are expected to pressure an already strained public school system".³³ According to "Humanitarian Action" the Education Cluster estimates 163,000 returnee children will require assistance to integrate into community-based education (CBE) and public schools" in 2024.³⁴

In Pakistan, only those with documentation have proper access to educational facilities. Given that the current returns largely concern undocumented Afghans, most of their children were likely unable to attend school or other educational facilities in Pakistan. Consequently, returnee children often find themselves without basic literacy skills, hindering their integration within the Afghan education system.³⁵ Documented children might also be at risk of deprivation in Afghanistan. Following the official return approach implemented in Pakistan from the fall of 2023, numerous Afghan schools (in Pakistan) closed because of government orders and/or a decline in student enrolment.³⁶ As such, even documented children are deprived of education due to reduced facilities, access problems or even fear, and hence face difficulties integrating within the new system.

Displaced girls are among those most likely to be affected when it comes to education. Many girls have lost and are likely to lose their access to education given the age restriction imposed on education for girls in Afghanistan. Moreover, based on a study conducted by Samuel Hall for UNICEF, IDP and returnees are likely to miss months or even years of school after displacement.³⁷ While this affects both girls and boys, girls are more at risk given the age limit imposed on their education. Although families may intend to enrol their daughters, by the time they can do so, the girls may have aged out.³⁸

³¹ NRC, Afghanistan Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment Report February 2024, 2024

³² This conclusion stems from analysis conducted by Samuel Hall using UN-Habitat vulnerability assessment profiles in collaboration with UNHCR.

³³ NRC, Rapid Protection Assessment of People Returning from Pakistan, Nangarhar, January 2024

³⁴ Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2024, Education, January 2024

³⁵ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024

³⁶ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Afghan Children's Access to Education in Iran and Pakistan, December 2023

³⁷ Samuel Hall/UNICEF, Generating Evidence on Afghan Child Migrants and IDP children in Pakistan, 2023

³⁸ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Afghan Children's Access to Education in Iran and Pakistan, December 2023

Girls, especially displaced girls, are also among the populations least likely to have documentation. This lack of documentation prevents them from being registered in school, and thus deprived of education. Under the current authorities in Afghanistan, “parents are less likely to get tazkiras³⁹ for their daughters, given the restrictions placed on girls attending school beyond 6th grade”.⁴⁰ This pushes many girls in a cycle of deprivation. This situation has a profound psychological impact, causing increased anxiety, depression, and hopelessness, especially for women and girls.⁴¹

This trend of lack of education does not stop at children and adolescents, but also applies to adults. According to the World Bank, the heads of households of the current returnees “are mostly comprised of uneducated individuals – unable to read and write”.⁴² As visible in the table below, these individuals are less educated than the host population in Jalalabad. A decreased skilled and educated returnee workforce means that the newer displaced population of Jalalabad will also have less access to sustainable employment conditions compared to local residents. However, if the returns were to continue and expand to Proof of Registration Card (PoR) holders in Pakistan, the potential returnees would be more aligned with the “education profile of the hosts” because the PoR populations in Pakistan have much better access to education than non-documented Afghan nationals. While this information, along with the content in the below table, might be prospective, it is potentially useful in planning for integration of returnees.

Profile of current and potential returns vs. hosts: Education (ARRNA 2023)

- Current returns (HoH) mostly comprised of un-educated individuals unable to read and write; significantly less educated than hosts.
- Potential returns – more aligned with education profile of hosts

	% no education (age 15+)	% completed primary (age 15+)	% completed secondary or above (age 25+)
Afghanistan (hosts)	65%	16%	13%
Returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan (July-Dec 2023)	94%	4%	2%
Torkham (July-December 2023)	93%	4%	2%
Spin Boldak (July-December 2023)	97%	2%	1%
Potential - PoR	65%	29%	10%

Access to Livelihood

According to REACH data, the unemployment rate of displaced persons in Nangarhar in September 2023 was very close to that of the resident population. Within the sample, 96.4 % of the displaced population and 96.8 % of the host population reported having at least one adult working outside in the previous month prior to the study (all types of employment). While these differences seem minimal, they might not accurately portray the reality of the situation, especially following the returns. Access to livelihoods among the returnee population in Jalalabad, as depicted by the OCHA MRAT survey, reveals a heavy reliance on unstable income sources, with nearly 70% of respondents depending on loans and over half engaging in daily labour. The UN HABITAT survey in informal settlements presents a slight variation in livelihood strategies, with a greater emphasis on daily labour compared to borrowing. This shift could imply that the options for borrowing might have diminished over time, forcing individuals to seek whatever immediate work is available, despite its precarious nature.⁴³

The UN HABITAT vulnerability profile further sheds light on the dire economic situation in Jalalabad’s ISETs. It reports alarmingly low household incomes, with around 65% of respondents earning less than 5,000 Afghanis per month (approximately 64 USD), or less than 0.5 USD per person per day. Female-headed households find themselves in an even more precarious position, with nearly a quarter reporting incomes of less than 1,000 Afghanis a month (around 13 USD). The ARRNA review highlighted that current returnees are less skilled than the hosts. These differences in skills are likely to lead to difficulty in finding employment, generating an income and integrating within Jalalabad.

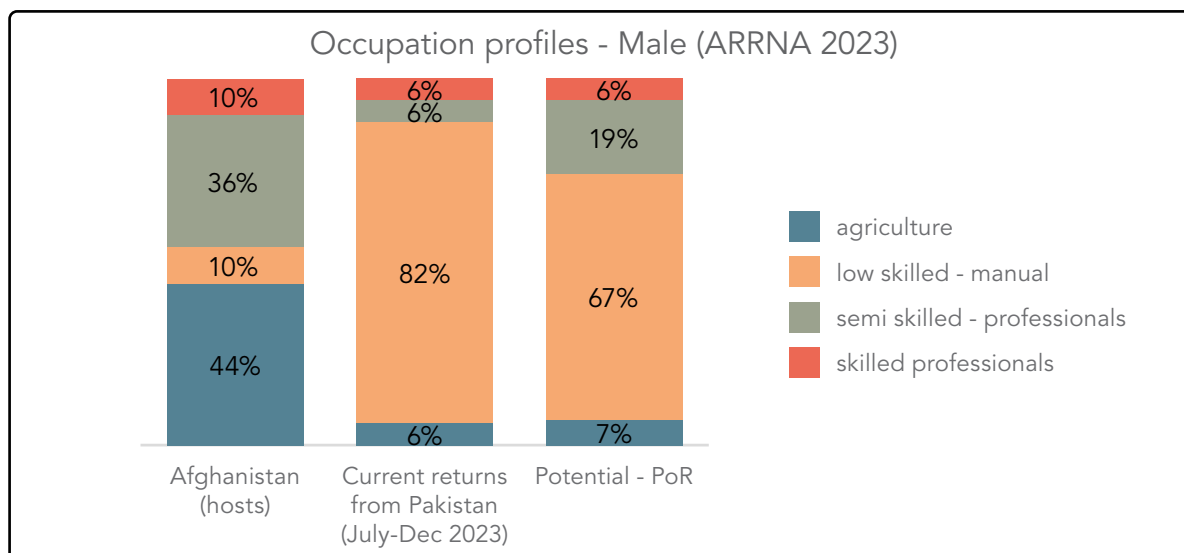
³⁹ The national identity document in Afghanistan.

⁴⁰ IOM/TWG/Samuel Hall, Documentation and Legal Identification in Afghanistan, 2023

⁴¹ Regional Refugee Response Plan for Afghan Situation, Education Away from Home, Supporting education for Afghan refugee children and youth in Iran, Education Brief, November 2023

⁴² World Bank, ARRNA Durable Solutions Desk Review by the World Bank, based on IOM and UNHCR data sources, January 2024

⁴³ This conclusion stems from analysis conducted by Samuel Hall using UN-Habitat vulnerability assessment profiles in collaboration with UNHCR.



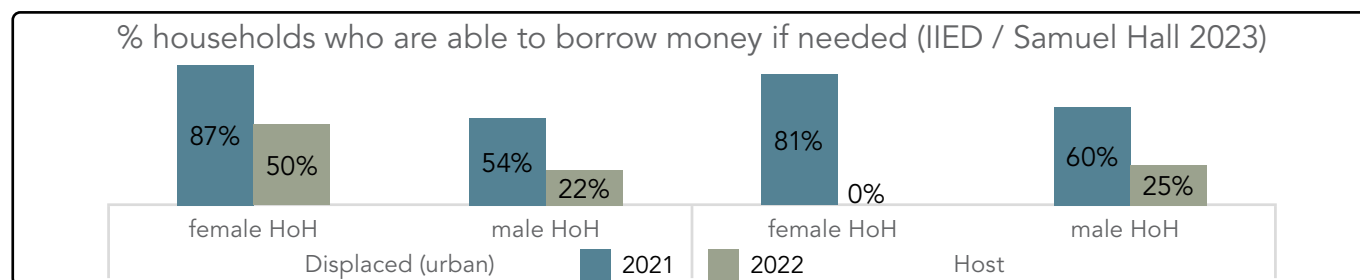
Loss of possessions, a threat for returnee livelihoods

Most of the Afghans that returned in late 2023 lost property and assets prior to return. They notably had to comply with a limit of 50,000 Pakistani rupees (about 180 USD) on the amount of money returnees could take back with themselves, which is insufficient for sustainable reintegration within Afghanistan. Returnees were restricted from taking valuables like livestock, further depleting their resources. This situation negatively impacts the livelihood of returnee families upon return to Afghanistan.

Yet, prior to the start of returns, an IIED and Samuel Hall study reported minimal differences between the displaced and host population in terms of employment especially in Majboorabad, a neighbourhood of Jalalabad. According to that study, thanks to low discrimination rates, IDPs and returnees were able to take advantage of their skills to find employment. However, all respondents agreed that the displaced faced a few more obstacles compared to hosts. It was for example harder for IDPs and returnees to launch their own business or find work, given "limited resources, money spent on house rent, and most importantly, not having the necessary connections."⁴⁴ While both IDPs and returnees might lack the necessary connections, and understanding of the way business is conducted in Jalalabad, returnees, especially those that have never lived or have only lived very little in Afghanistan, face increased difficulties. Some of the displaced, however, may have had one advantage compared to the host population: they could benefit from NGO help. Both hosts and displaced populations found that returnee and IDP populations have more access to training by NGOs than the hosts, and "their businesses are not subject to tax or registration fees".⁴⁵ This is likely the case because of the assumed temporariness of IDP and returnees stay within the city.

With the increase of climate related disasters, such as droughts and floods, the main source of income in the rest of the province, namely agriculture, has greatly suffered. Many in rural areas have lost their crops and livestock and hence employment to these disasters, which may act as drivers of displacement to urban areas, such as Jalalabad. Given the saturation of employment opportunities, the deteriorating economic situation in Afghanistan, the incapacity to bring back assets and property, lack of connections and information regarding the host community, the displaced often face increased livelihood difficulties. Some are forced to adopt negative coping strategies, such a decreased food consumption, renouncing on medical expenses, and child labour among other consequences. "An income is the main hope for reintegration and acceptance in communities."⁴⁶

Women's livelihoods: Restrictions on women's rights and movement have been devastating for Afghan women. While Afghan women made less money than men and were financially worse off before August 2021, increased restrictions "have made them far less likely to be able to cover their household expenses through income from work. In 2021, based on the IIED and Samuel Hall study, 87% of interviewed female-headed displaced households in Majboorabad in Jalalabad reported being able to borrow money — this number dropped to only 50% in 2022."⁴⁷ Among female-headed host households, the drop was more pronounced.



⁴⁴ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁴⁵ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁴⁶ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024

⁴⁷ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Displaced people in Afghanistan's cities need support, January 2024

Such restrictions have particularly affected women who are heads of households. Widows, women-headed households who have been compelled to return without male family members, and left-behind women frequently find themselves taking on the role of breadwinner in their families. However, current restrictions often prevent them from working, at least formally, resulting in the loss of a potential source of income. "In Majboorabad, 7% of female respondents worked in the pre-Taliban period, compared to 14% afterwards. While this data predates the Taliban's increasingly severe restrictions on women's employment, the data also indicates the informal character of work in Afghanistan will continue, as survival is at stake."⁴⁸ Decreased livelihood opportunities for women often force them to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as borrowing money and child labour.

According to the World Bank, given the restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as the forced returns pushing many women to restart their lives, "86% of women households (HH) that are returning to Afghanistan are active, whereas only 43% [of female hosts HH] are active in Afghanistan."⁴⁹ This means, although many of the female returnees are undocumented, they had access to increased livelihood opportunities in Pakistan compared to Afghanistan. As such, many of these women when settling with their families in Jalalabad will most likely face loss of income and loss of "access to labour market following returns" given restrictions from authorities in Afghanistan.⁵⁰ While male Afghan PoR card holders have a more aligned activity rate with that of the host population, Afghan women have lower access to livelihood mechanisms. This goes to show that the intersectionality between gender and displacement status are major obstacles to material safety.

Profile of current and potential returns vs. hosts: Labour Market

- Current wave of returns has very high activity rate in Pakistan, for both male and female Head of Household aged 25 and above.
- Among PoR population activity rate more aligned with host for male population aged 25+, while significantly lower among women.

	% active male HoH	% active female HoH
Afghanistan (hosts)	80%	43%
Current returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan (July-December 2023)	99,8%	86,0%
Torkham (July-December 2023)	99,9%	83,0%
Spin Boldak (July-December 2023)	99,6%	93,0%

Note: HoH aged 25+

Source: ARRANA Phase 1 - The World Bank, 2024

During Samuel Hall's Participatory Forum initiative in Jalalabad, "authorities interviewed mentioned their interest in creating a bazaar exclusively for women to sell their products and buy their supplies. Nevertheless, women's limited purchase capacity and economic dependence, the need to combine productive and care work in that space, and the limitations to their mobility should be considered to assess the sustainability of this type of segregated plans. For instance, IDP/Returnee female entrepreneurs mentioned not having the means to open a shop outside of their house, not being allowed to go to the market without a man from the family, and taking care of dependants while working".⁵¹

Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

"Our financial situation was very bad. Our biggest issue right now is our economic situation: we have no income, I [father] go everyday trying to find daily work, but cannot find, so I cannot buy food for my children. This is my brother's house, I cannot afford to rent a house, and I cannot afford to pay rent to my brother. He [brother] keeps asking for rent." - NRC SS12

From eviction to eviction: Return and eviction remain the preferred policy options for the Pakistani but also the Afghan authorities. While initially put on hold following the implementation of returns from Pakistan, Afghan authorities have plans to resume IDP and returnee evictions from informal settlements in Jalalabad. The displaced are seen as responsible for the congestion of the city and saturation of resources. While UN HABITAT data suggests that 95% of those surveyed reported not having received an eviction notice, NRC reports that in Nangarhar, close to 43,200 families are at risk of eviction, and an additional; 19,300 families have received verbal notices of evictions -indicating a likelihood of being evicted at any time - from August to November 2023. These numbers are much higher than in any other region and province in Afghanistan⁵² DRC data shows that, between July and December 2023, evictions and threats of evictions were the most commonly reported HLP incidents in Nangarhar. "According to the data, poverty and unemployment resulting in the non-payment of rent was found to be a key driving factor in the eviction or threat of eviction. IDPs and returnee households were reported to be particularly at risk as they are commonly living in rented houses, do not own any land or property, and face high levels of poverty."⁵³

⁴⁸ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Displaced people in Afghanistan's cities need support, January 2024

⁴⁹ World Bank, ARRANA Durable Solutions Desk Review by the World Bank, based on IOM and UNHCR data sources, January 2024

⁵⁰ World Bank, ARRANA Durable Solutions Desk Review by the World Bank, based on IOM and UNHCR data sources, January 2024

⁵¹ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Displaced people in Afghanistan's cities need support, January 2024

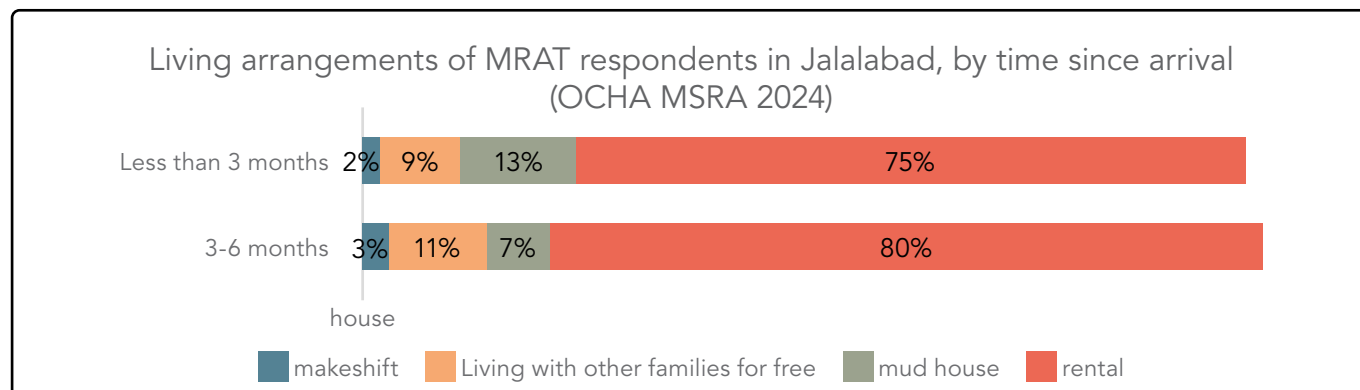
⁵² NRC, Informal Settlements Monitoring Report Aug – Nov 2023, 2023

⁵³ DRC, Internal Report, 2023

These conditions are bound to get worse, if the returns from Pakistan are mismanaged and continue increasing. According to an ADSP Samuel Hall report on “Land Allocation Schemes for the Displaced in Afghanistan”, “challenges surrounding access to land are, for returnees and IDPs, added to challenges surrounding access to, and implementation of, the LAS initiatives to which they may be entitled.”⁵⁴

Between September 15th, 2023 and May 18th, 2024, 29% of all returnees had Nangarhar for destination.⁵⁵ Upon return to Afghanistan, some of the returnees hope to settle within urban areas where chances of employment are higher, yet many have no choice but to settle in Nangarhar’s informal settlements where they are faced with the threat of eviction from the authorities.⁵⁶ Those that can afford it will be renting houses, going back to their own homes, or intended to live with their relatives. In Jalalabad, based on PDUW data, most people live in rented housing, and some share with extended family.

HLP rights emerge as a critical concern for MRAT respondents in Jalalabad, with the majority residing in rented accommodations and expressing anxiety about their ability to remain in their dwellings. This concern is pronounced among newer returnees, highlighting the precarious nature of their housing.



Furthermore, over half of the respondents report that their current shelter lacks sufficient privacy, underscoring the need for improved housing conditions that respect the dignity and security of individuals and families.

The UN HABITAT assessment of informal settlements in Jalalabad paints a detailed picture of the housing conditions faced by residents. The report indicates that the majority of dwellings are made of mud bricks, which, while relatively durable compared to temporary shelters like tents, do not offer the same level of security and longevity as concrete or brick constructions. Despite this, the low prevalence of tents suggests a level of investment in more permanent housing structures, possibly indicating a tacit allowance by authorities for the consolidation of these settlements. Before the returns, in 2022, according to the REACH data, while 75.5% hosts reported living in solid/finished apartments or houses, only 57.6% of the displaced population reported the same. These numbers are very much likely to change given the thousands of returnees.

However, the UN HABITAT data also reveals the fragile HLP rights within these communities. A significant portion of residents have settled on vacant land, with approximately 65% of households acquiring their property through such means. This method of land acquisition often results in weak ownership claims, leading to tenure insecurity and thus hindering local integration. The fear of eviction, lack of land ownership (common within displaced populations), or the appropriation of assets discourages investment in permanent structures, adversely affecting not only shelter and housing but also the provision of adequate WASH services, livelihood opportunities, and local infrastructure.

Energy-displacement nexus in Afghanistan

The interplay between energy and displacement remains underexplored, yet crucial for understanding the lives of displaced populations and for targeted durable solutions interventions to support their levels of physical and material safety. Two research studies conducted in Afghanistan by Samuel Hall for the World Bank in 2022⁵⁷ and 2023⁵⁸ contribute to filling these knowledge gaps. To understand the nexus between energy access and displacement, in 2022 Samuel Hall targeted 1,166 displaced and host respondents in Afghanistan via remote random dialling; and in 2023 Samuel Hall conducted 3,000 in-person surveys with displaced and host households in Daikundi, Herat, Kabul, Paktia and Samangan, in both rural and urban communities. The main findings show that:

- Most displaced individuals live among host communities, with similar living arrangements.
- Energy sources and access are similar for both displaced and host communities.
- Recent returnees have less permanent energy solutions compared to those in protracted displacement.
- A significant portion of displaced individuals reported a shift in their primary electricity sources post-displacement. Returnees from both Pakistan and Iran reported reduced access to electricity upon return, contrasting with their experiences of consistent grid electricity abroad.

⁵⁴ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Land Allocation Schemes for the Displaced in Afghanistan, June 2024

⁵⁵ UNHCR/IOM, UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #20, May 2024

⁵⁶ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024

⁵⁷ World Bank/Samuel Hall, Afghanistan Energy Study 2.0, 2022

⁵⁸ Ibid

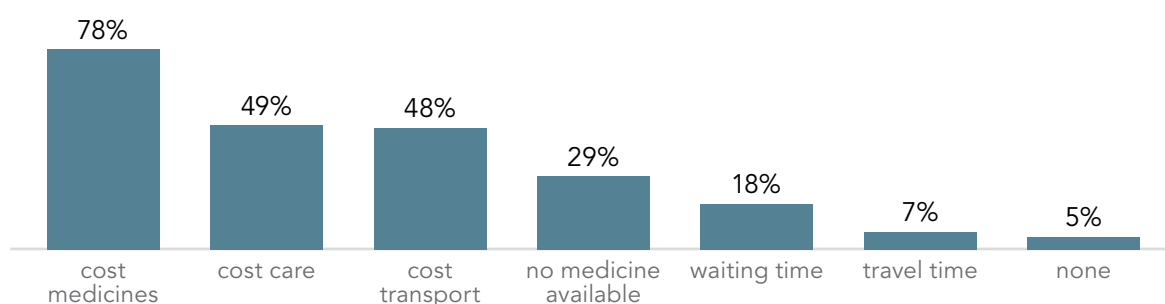
- Solar energy is a vital energy source for many, in particular in rural areas. But disparities exist between displaced and non-displaced, with the latter having higher-quality solar devices, a reflection of the inequalities between the two.
- The fundamental distinction in energy access is less about displacement status and more about location, with urban dwellers more likely to be connected to the electricity grid than their rural counterparts. Rural households often depend on community mini-grid systems or other alternative sources.

Health

In Jalalabad, affordability is the predominant barrier to accessing healthcare facilities. Nearly 80% of respondents, mainly returnees, included in the OCHA MRAT dataset, indicated that even when healthcare services are accessible, the cost of medicines remains prohibitively high, preventing them from receiving the necessary care. "Access to and affordability of healthcare are major concerns in both Jalalabad's camp and urban settings, as residents struggle with deteriorating health conditions. Many individuals lack the income to purchase necessary medication, leading to the neglect of crucial medical treatments."⁵⁹

According to the PDUW data, in Majboorabad, Jalalabad, overall health conditions have been decreasing. This decline is especially notable among male respondents, where the proportion reporting poor health has more than doubled, rising from 15% to 36% between the first and second rounds of data collection (respectively in 2021 and 2022, post-regime change). Among women, the situation was already serious in the first round, with more than half of displaced women in Majboorabad reporting poor or very poor health. Women, who have been forced to return without their male head of household also have a harder time accessing healthcare.

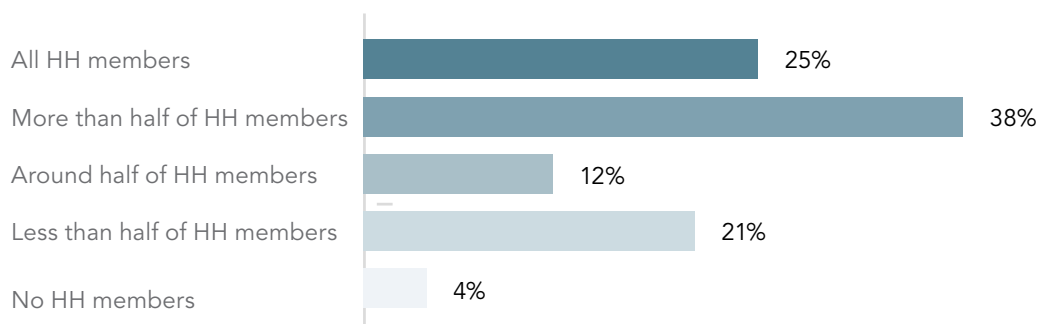
Obstacles to receiving healthcare for OCHA MRAT respondents in Jalalabad



Psychosocial wellbeing: Respondents, across studies conducted in 2021, 2022, and 2023 in Jalalabad have expressed a pervasive sense of worry and anxiety, reflecting the profound impact of their displacement experience and deteriorating livelihood on their mental and emotional well-being. Women primarily have become increasingly pessimistic about their future, and with that of their children, with a majority expecting a decline in their quality of life.⁶⁰ Concerns over stress disorders, including suicidal tendencies among Afghan youth, and post-traumatic stress disorders among teenagers of returnee families are also prevalent.⁶¹ Yet, overall access to care and support for mental health appears to be scarce in both the camp and urban settings.

Legal Safety

% of HH members with tazkira, national ID, or passport

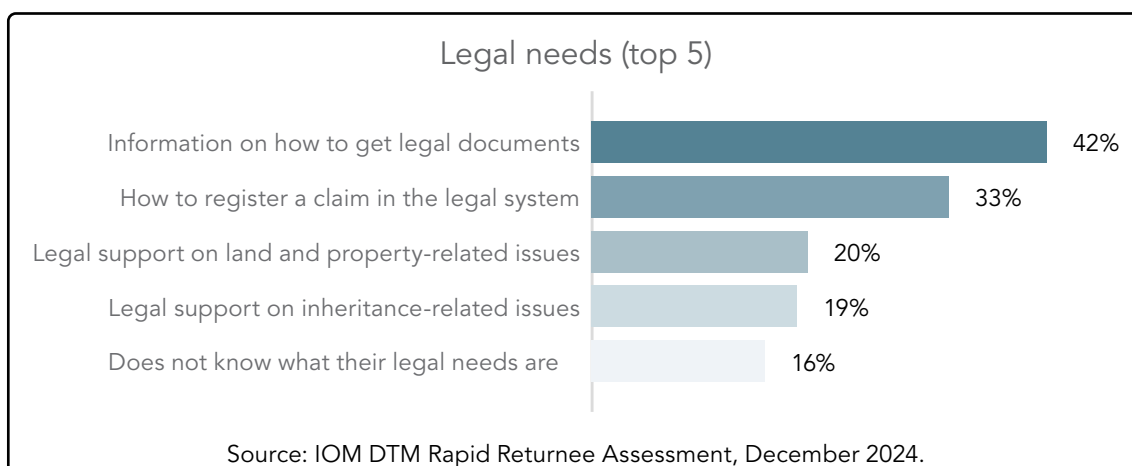


Source: IOM DTM Rapid Returnee Assessment, December 2024.

⁵⁹ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁶⁰ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁶¹ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024



Public Representation

MRAT data suggests that more than a quarter of respondents feel unrepresented formally, a figure that decreases to 13% among those who have been in Jalalabad slightly longer. This trend suggests an improvement in community integration and access to representation over time, as individuals and families establish connections and better understand the local legal landscape.

Newer returnees, understandably, have decreased representation compared to IDPs and of course the host population. So far, while certain returnees have been given “temporary accommodation in informal settlements such as Sheikh Mesri”, by international organisations like IOM or UNHCR, they were not included in community life or given representation within their new communities and their shuras.⁶²

While IDPs have larger representation within Jalalabad, such as Shuras, women’s Shuras, and community leaders, they highlighted during participatory forums that they do not have any representation in the Jalalabad municipality. The municipality had shown reticence in integrating them within its structure given the perceived temporariness of their stay within Jalalabad.⁶³ Without proper representation and influencing power, advocacy for local integration and improved livelihood will be difficult. For example, women’s shuras meet twice a week in the IDP settlements of Jalalabad, however, these only have coordination purposes. Given that they do not have the necessary connections with authorities or influential figures, they are unable to influence their condition.⁶⁴

Despite this, self-organised unions, with both host and displaced members are common in various areas and settlements of Jalalabad. “These organisations are created to set prices, pool resources, and represent sectoral interests, although female representation was missing and there were no examples of female unions cited in the interviews.”⁶⁵

Documentation

A 2022 study for the Legal Identity Working Group concluded that “access to documentation is not equal for all groups in Afghanistan”.⁶⁶ Specifically, women, children, IDPs and returnees face additional difficulties related to their displacement, gender, and age, and specific barriers in accessing identification and civil registration documentation. A lack of documentation can deprive these groups of any crucial services such as education (as was seen under the education sub-criteria), access to basic services, HLP rights, or even access to humanitarian aid.⁶⁷ While certain organisations provide aid to the undocumented, not all do. The situation has even been made more difficult following the change in government. According to the IIED/SH study, 78% of displaced populations have declared that access to documentation has become harder under the current authorities in Afghanistan.

Based on different data collected by NRC, OCHA, and Samuel Hall, across different populations and years, hosts and displaced populations in Nangarhar and Jalalabad, seem to have more access to documentation compared to other provinces. As visible in the below graph, among the people interviewed in Nangarhar, 94% of the displaced population have access to a tazkira, just 2% short of the host population. The displaced have more access to e-tazkiras.

⁶² ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024

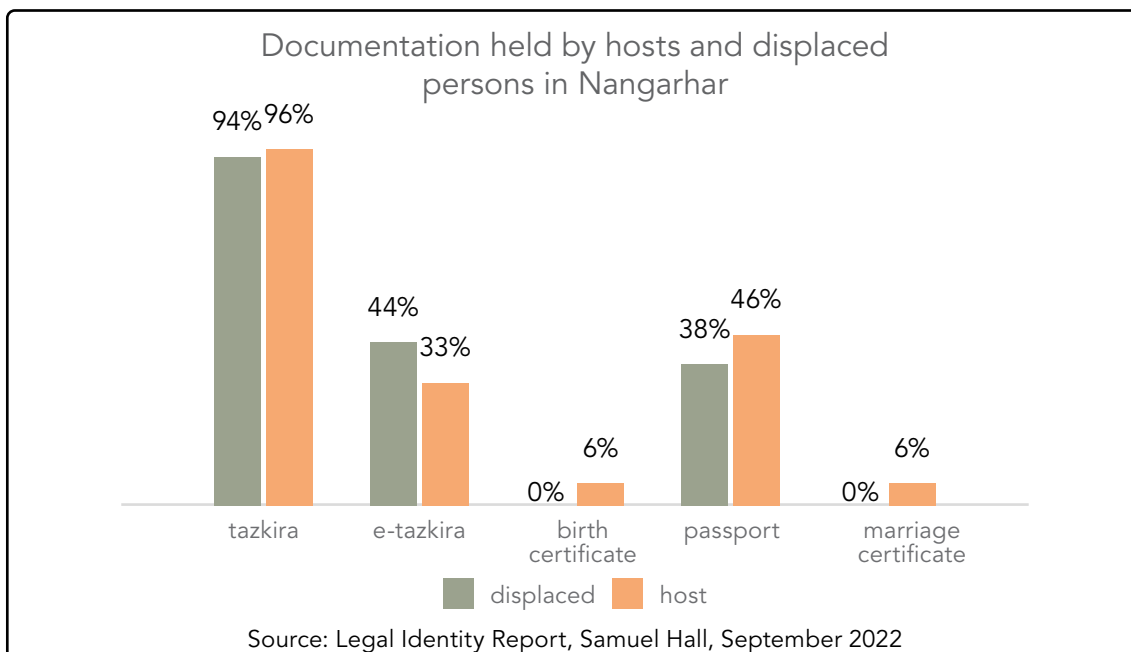
⁶³ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁶⁴ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Participatory Forum Jalalabad/City note, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, July 2023

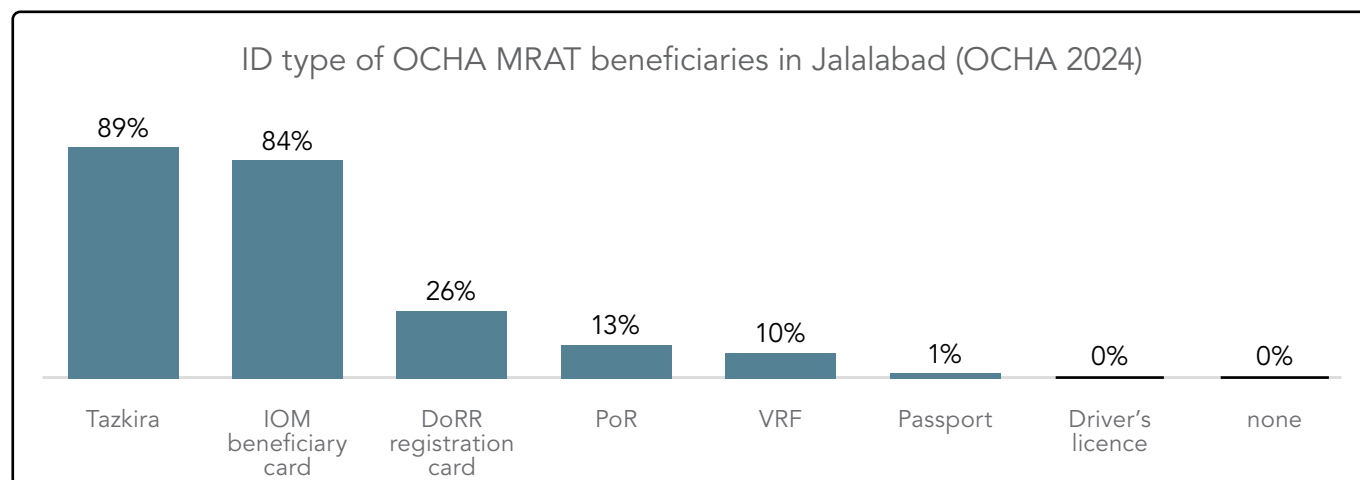
⁶⁵ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁶⁶ Samuel Hall/IOM, Documentation and Legal Identification in Afghanistan, Legal Identity Technical Working Group, 2023

⁶⁷ WFP/Samuel Hall, Documentation & Legal ID: Securing access to humanitarian aid and the financial sector in Afghanistan, 2023



The same relatively positive scenario is confirmed by OCHA's MRAT survey among returnees (see below): this data indicates that a substantial majority of respondents, approximately 90%, possess some form of identification, primarily tazkiras (89%). Many also hold additional forms of ID, including IOM beneficiary cards (84%) and DoRR registration cards (26%), which play a crucial role in accessing services and asserting legal rights. This finding is echoed in the UN HABITAT assessment within informal settlements, where only a minimal 6% of households reported lacking at least one male member with a tazkira.



While Nangarhar fares better, when it comes to national averages problems in terms of access to documentation persist. The DTM returnee assessment highlights that it is uncommon for all members of returnee households to possess such IDs, with a reliance on the head of household for documentation and, by extension, access to services and legal protection. The IOM assessment further underscores a significant gap in knowledge or access to legal documentation, with 42% of returnees in Nangarhar (16% less than the national return average from Pakistan) indicating a need for information on how to obtain these documents. NRC's protection monitoring study of Jalalabad confirms IOM's assessment. Focus group participants highlighted that most "returnees or arrivals who have been away from home do not have much knowledge or information on how to obtain a tazkira or the process to follow for obtaining civil documentation."⁶⁸ Moreover, monetary reasons, as well as obligation to travel to their province of origin to obtain a tazkira represent other factors why many displaced populations are unable to obtain proper identification.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ NRC, Rapid Protection Assessment of People Returning from Pakistan, Nangarhar, January 2024

⁶⁹ IOM/TWG/Samuel Hall, Documentation and Legal Identification in Afghanistan, 2023

Changes in Business Registration practices among displaced populations following August 2021

Under the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA), bribes and administrative shortcuts were common, especially for businesses operating informally. Since August 2021, IDP and returnee enterprises tend to operate formally to avoid business closure. Smaller and home-based businesses, led by both women and men with limited resources, are rarely registered and largely informal. Smaller home-based businesses are often preferred by women as it allows them to reduce costs but also to “remain safe and close to their families and neighbours/customers”, while respecting cultural norms and the impositions put in place by the authorities.⁷⁰ The registration process for IDP and returnee enterprises with the municipality is straightforward, with representatives setting tax and licensing fees based on an initial assessment. Moreover, the municipality offers IDP and returnees a reduced registration fee not because they are poorer, but because their businesses are seen as temporary.

Family Reunification

While the existing data sets do not provide sufficient data on levels of family separation, qualitative assessments show a growing concern over family separation among the recent returns to Afghanistan. According to a report written by Zia Ur Rehman, a Pakistani researcher and journalist, a pattern of families being separated, particularly when it affects children, minors, and unaccompanied women, is causing serious concerns. It not only disrupts family cohesion but also puts vulnerable individuals at risk of exploitation, abuse, and persecution.⁷¹ So far, no accessible and efficient mechanisms have been put in place to reunite returnees separated family members.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Based on NRC’s Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment, while Nangarhar currently seems to fare better than most provinces across Afghanistan,⁷² **additional returns are likely to deteriorate an already precarious situation across the province.** These returns along with increasing internal displacement, because of economic deterioration and increased climate related disasters, will add strain on the various services available within Jalalabad and its surrounding areas. Echoing previous trends from the 2016-2017 returns,⁷³ these conditions are likely to cause increased Physical, Material and Legal Safety issues for both hosts and the displaced across the province and in Jalalabad, thus significantly reducing prospects for durable solutions.

Returns cannot be a viable durable solution especially when those are not the preferred option for the displaced and conditions for returns are not met in areas of origin. Moreover, “civil society representatives reaffirmed that after decades spent in displacement in Jalalabad, IDPs demand a pathway for local integration”.⁷⁴ It is imperative that returns are voluntary and are based on informed decisions by the displaced. Durable solutions must be achieved in full respect of human rights – in safety, dignity, and with the effective participation of IDPs not only in the planning, but in the different stages of the process. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, “Integrating human rights into durable solutions is not only a legal obligation, but it is a moral imperative”.⁷⁵

This brief serves as an example of the use of data from humanitarian and basic needs assessments, coming together to provide a joint outlook on durable solutions priorities and prospects in Jalalabad. It can be used as a framework to add data and information in order to prioritise gaps and design programmes. Initiatives such as the ongoing participatory planning forums in Jalalabad can then be used as a basis to present this data and co-design solutions with the authorities, to discuss inclusive urban solutions and responses to protracted displacement, beyond returns, to consider local integration.

Recommendations

•To the National and Local Authorities:

- Explore the full range of possible durable solutions: Returns to areas of origin cannot and must not be seen as the only viable durable solution for displacement. Greater discussion is needed to review a range of initiatives that support the broader durable solutions agenda. A possible alternative for urgent consideration includes long term, local integration of displaced people in urban hubs.
- The municipality of Jalalabad and Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) should continue participating in the Jalalabad Participatory Forums, alongside other key directorates – such as the directorate of Agriculture. These forums integrate data to co-design solutions with other key stakeholders, including the displaced.
- Enact an urgent moratorium on all evictions of informal settlements, that should remain in place until long-term durable solutions for internal displacement have been established.

•To Donors:

- Humanitarian actors need to be better equipped with predictable, longer-term quality nexus funding that is also responsive to acute emergencies.

⁷⁰ GCRF IIED/Samuel Hall, Country Report, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, September 2023

⁷¹ Unpublished Report by Zia Ur Rehman on returns from Pakistan, 2024

⁷² NRC, Afghanistan Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment Report February 2024, 2024

⁷³ ADSP/Samuel Hall, Solutions for Afghan nationals ordered to return from Pakistan, May 2024

⁷⁴ GCRF IIED, Participatory Forum Jalalabad/City note, *Protracted displacement in an urban world*, research consortium, July 2023

⁷⁵ Paula Gaviria Betancur, Internal Displacement and Solutions’ Conference, How Can Protection Be Integrated into Solutions, March 2024

- There are opportunities to influence better, more inclusive, and more sustainable policy choices from the authorities, but policies of non-engagement from donors and donor countries have closed possible avenues of dialogue. Clear engagement strategies and formal risk and mitigation measures from donors for fragile and complex contexts like Afghanistan would be welcomed to better support the efforts of humanitarian actors on the ground.
- Invest in data harmonisation across humanitarian and basic needs to support the durable solutions conversation to assess priorities on durable solutions and to build a common agenda in the country.
- Support participatory planning forums approaches and inclusive urban solutions through the prism of physical, material and legal safeties to further the link between city actors and durable solutions.

• **To Aid Organisations:**

- Prioritise engagement with local communities and affected populations to understand their needs, concerns, and perspectives regarding durable solutions. Emphasize the importance of participatory approaches to decision-making and the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the planning and implementation of eviction-related interventions.
- Adopt whole-of-community, area-based approach ensuring protection and assistance needs of both displaced communities and their hosts are addressed coherently and holistically, responding to the specific living conditions, risks and opportunities of the local context.
- Increase coordination, collaboration and data-sharing across humanitarian organisations within existing consortia. The National Durable Solutions Working Group can also provide a more comprehensive mapping of existing data.
- Awareness campaigns to be continued: Although a recent ban restricts public awareness information campaigns, given the authorities' interest in furthering durable solutions, targeted agreement should be reached to increase levels of information provided to the displaced, as well as hosts, in displacement-affected communities. In combination with these campaigns, community early warning mechanisms have proven to be very effective and could increasingly be used to support durable solutions efforts.
- Use the durable solutions framework presented in this brief to identify gaps in data and collect missing data on durable solutions in Afghanistan and to build a common agenda on durable solutions monitoring in the country.

Annex I: Mapping the data ecosystem on durable solutions in Afghanistan

Data mapping

The data mapping and indicator mapping is a process that will take time and consultations. This is a first step in this effort. The ongoing data mapping effort aims to compile indicators aligned with the ReDSS framework to compare displaced and non-displaced populations across Afghanistan, with a specific focus on Nangarhar province/Jalalabad/Torkham. This overview is not exhaustive and provides a high-level summary without directly comparing the datasets contents.

National-level data that could inform Durable Solutions conversations.

- **REACH Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA) 2023**
 - Conducted across all provinces with 20,500 interviews (individual respondents but within a household survey).
 - Previous rounds indicated negligible differences in needs between displaced populations and host communities, leading to a focus on rural vs. urban analysis rather than displacement status.
 - Offers an extensive list of indicators, including efforts to capture female voices. The approach of not stratifying by displacement status might overlook specific vulnerabilities but provides an understanding of national needs.
- **UNWOMEN consultation 2023**
 - 450 interviews across 34 provinces, focusing on women's experiences. Centres on income generating activities (IGA), service access, mental health, physical security, and social interactions among women post-August 2021.
 - Only data summary provided at the time of writing.
- **IOM DTM Baseline Mobility Assessment**
 - Settlement-based data from September to December 2022 covering community-level estimates. Some 17,000 communities profiled, KII methodology.
 - Focus on material and legal safety dimensions, including displacement reasons, places of origin, and periods of displacement.
 - Lacks individual data but provides a macro view on mobility and geographical distribution of displaced and returnee populations.
- **IOM DTM Community-based Needs Assessments**
 - Community-level information offering insights into documentation, legal issues, health, security, education, and nutrition.
 - Fills gaps in the ReDSS framework by offering context for area-based programming. Direct comparisons between displaced and non-displaced populations are not possible but the data is useful for broader community context.
- **UNOCHA Multi-sector rapid assessment tool (MRAT)**
 - Focus on crisis situations, including returns, covering vulnerabilities mainly in material safety and protection concerns. Large sample of over 20,000 individual respondents but within a household survey.
 - Targets vulnerable individuals, which might skew the dataset towards higher vulnerability levels.
- **National household surveys (Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey - ALCS)**
 - Possibility to analyse outcomes of mobile populations (returnees, IDPs, economic migrants) and contrast with hosts for 2007, 2011, 2014, 2017
 - Data which is quickly dated and needs to be accessed with permission of Afghan authorities (SH has been granted the right to explore these data sources)

Nangarhar-returns specific

- **DoRR Datasets**
 - Basic datasets on WASH, Shelter, Security, Health, and Education.
- **REACH Jalalabad City Area-Based Response**
 - KII-based with 417 data points, plus 202 household surveys, focusing on IDPs and host communities.
 - Potential for area-based planning is moderated by a certain lack of methodological transparency.
- **IOM DTM Rapid Returnee Assessment**
 - Phone-based survey of over 4,000 recent returnees from Pakistan.
 - Immediate needs assessment covering legal, shelter, documentation, food security, education/healthcare.
 - Provides insights into the immediate needs of returnees, though the phone survey format may limit depth.
- **UNHABITAT Settlement Profiles**
 - Detailed spatial and demographic analysis of major IDP informal settlements around Jalalabad.
 - Comprehensive household survey of seven sites, 116,652 individuals and 19,302 households, including demographic details, reasons for displacement, housing conditions, access to services like water, sanitation, education, healthcare, security situations, livelihood opportunities, and local infrastructure.
 - Offers a valuable cross-sectional view of vulnerabilities and needs, focusing on opportunities for durable solutions, particularly for women and vulnerable groups.
- **IRC Host Household Registration in Nangarhar**
 - Collected between the summer of 2023 and the early spring of 2024 targeting only very vulnerable hosts, most of whom have no source of income. Profile of their needs and requested support (mainly cash).
 - Sample size 444, sampling procedure geared towards vulnerability-based targeting.

• **IRC Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment “210” and “MSNA v1” datasets for Nangarhar**

- 211 returnees interviewed in October 2023 through sampling.
- 205 returnees interviewed in September and October 2023 through sampling.
- Covers vulnerabilities, information, perceived safety, top needs, health and healthcare access, mental wellbeing, protection issues, access to education, assistance and problems receiving it, coping strategies, food security, income sources, WASH.

• **Samuel Hall’s PDUW Survey**

- Conducted in Majboorabad, Jalalabad, targeting 380 returnees and 150 host households across two rounds.
- Comprehensive assessment (demographic profile, migration history, economic conditions, services, aspirations).
- Detailed insights into urban displacement and integration challenges.

Annex II: Availability of indicators aligned with the ReDSS framework

The summary table offers a high-level overview of the data landscape concerning displaced persons.

Dimension	Indicators	Data availability
Physical safety	Displaced persons who have experienced safety incidents, including sexual and gender-based violence, compared to the resident population.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM)
	Displaced persons without discriminatory or arbitrary restrictions of freedom of movement compared to the resident population.	NA
	Displaced persons with adequate access to police and judiciary services compared to the resident population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons feeling safe in their current place of residence compared to the host population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons who do not face stigmatization in their current place of residence compared to the local population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons feeling accepted in the community where they live compared to the resident population.	Data gap
Material safety	Displaced persons with comparable food consumption to the local population and meeting international/national standards.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Prevalence of GAM/SAM among displaced persons compared to the resident population.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Displaced persons with adequate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene compared to the local population.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Displaced persons with adequate access to health care compared to the resident population.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Displaced children with access to formal education compared to the resident population.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Displaced persons with access to safety net interventions or who receive remittances compared to local residents with comparable needs.	Data gap
	Displaced persons facing legal or administrative obstacles to employment compared to the resident population.	NA
	Unemployment rates among displaced persons compared to the resident population or national average.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Displaced persons with access to sustainable employment conditions compared to local residents.	Data gap

	Poverty levels among displaced persons compared to the resident population or national average.	Partially available through proxy (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM for community)
	Displaced persons with adequate housing compared to the resident population.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Mechanisms to ensure access to land and/or secure tenure for displaced persons.	Data gap
	Displaced persons with resolved HLP claims compared to the resident population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons with secured rights to housing, land, and property documentation compared to the resident population.	Data gap
Legal safety	Displaced persons feeling that violations have been effectively remedied and a sense of justice restored compared to the local population.	Data gap
	Mechanisms with the legal mandate and capacity to provide displaced persons with remedies for violations suffered.	Data gap
	Displaced persons who accessed formal or informal/traditional justice mechanisms compared to the local population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons without birth certificates, national ID cards, or other personal documents relevant to the local context compared to the resident population or national average.	Available (REACH, MRAT, IOM DTM) and UNHABITAT (for IDP sites Jalalabad)
	Displaced persons facing no legal or administrative obstacles that prevent them from voting, being elected, or working in public service compared with the resident population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons participating in community or social organizations compared to the resident population.	Data gap
	Displaced persons involved in public decision-making processes compared to the resident population.	Data gap



About the Asia Displacement Solutions Platform

The Asia Displacement Solutions Platform is a joint initiative of the Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, which aims to contribute to the development of solutions for populations affected by displacement in the region.

Drawing upon its members' operational presence throughout Asia, and its extensive advocacy networks, ADSP engages in evidence-based advocacy initiatives to support improved outcomes for displacement-affected communities. As implementing agencies, ADSP members work closely with displaced populations and the communities that host them and are therefore able to contribute a distinctive, field-led, perspective to policy and advocacy processes which can sometimes be removed from on-the-ground realities, and, the concerns of those living with and in displacement.

By coming together under the aegis of the ADSP the three member agencies – global leaders in innovative policy and programming – commit to collaboration to achieve improved outcomes for displacement affected communities in the region.

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 AsiaDSP

About Samuel Hall

Samuel Hall is a social enterprise that conducts research, evaluates programmes, and designs policies in contexts of migration and displacement. Our approach is ethical, academically rigorous, and based on first-hand experience of complex and fragile settings.

Our research connects the voices of communities to changemakers for more inclusive societies. With offices in Afghanistan, Germany, Kenya, and Tunisia and a presence in Somalia, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates, we are based in the regions we study.

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