



DIASPORA
EMERGENCY ACTION
& COORDINATION

DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN REAL-TIME REVIEW

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The DEMAC, INCAS and AKS research teams give their thanks to the members of diaspora communities in Afghanistan and across the world, together with the representatives of donors, NGOs, and all other actors who supported this Real-Time Review (RTR), providing information and sharing their valuable knowledge and experiences.

This Real-Time Review is made possible by the generous support of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The contents and opinions expressed in this report should not be attributed to and do not represent the views of the Danish Refugee Council, DEMAC, DANIDA or the Danish Government.

This Real-Time Review was conducted between April and June 2022 by INCAS Senior Associates Gudrun Van Pottelbergh and Rachel Horan, and a team from Afghan Knowledge Solutions (AKS).

Published in August 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When the Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021, the already challenging humanitarian context in Afghanistan was only further complicated. Even before, the country's humanitarian situation was one of the worst in the world due to conflict, recurrent natural disasters, chronic poverty, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic. New challenges to human rights and basic freedoms, especially those of women, have arisen.

Afghan diaspora organizations have supported their community at large and have continued to do so after August 2021. To better understand the scope and priorities of the support of diaspora organizations, the Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination Initiative (DEMAC) conducted an initial Real-Time Review (RTR) of Diaspora Humanitarian Engagement in Afghanistan between August and October 2021 to provide a rapid analysis of diaspora response to the new situation in Afghanistan. That RTR identified a responsive and rapid self-mobilization of Afghan diaspora and DOs together with a sudden rise in advocacy and fundraising campaigns from August 2021 onward.

A follow-up Real-Time Review was commissioned by DEMAC in Spring 2022 to explore possible changes and developments in diaspora humanitarian engagement in Afghanistan. This current RTR aims to capture the impact, outreach, and organization of diaspora emergency responses within Afghanistan and to assess if and how the recently arrived diaspora is strengthening the humanitarian response. In addition, a gender lens has been used to assess the response from Afghan diaspora women organizations and networks.

The review was conducted from April to June with the main data collected in May 2022 through review of secondary literature, ten key informant interviews and nine focus group discussions with diaspora organizations and their representatives in country, beneficiaries of diaspora assistance and international organizations operational in Afghanistan. Twenty-two diaspora organizations participated directly in the Real-Time Review and sixty diaspora organizations were included in an online media monitoring. Data was collected with staff and beneficiaries located in Kabul, Baghlan and Uruzgan in addition to remote interviews and discussions with participants from Europe, North America and Australia.

The RTR identified two recurring horizontal themes driving the diaspora humanitarian engagement. First, the absence of women and girls' fundamental rights informs and frames diaspora organization response in manifold ways and cuts across all emerging themes of diaspora response in Afghanistan. Second, the topic of food insecurity is compounded by diaspora organizations' perceptions of skewed beneficiary selection and inequality in food distribution by the World Food Program (WFP) and their implementing partners.

In addition, the RTR provides an overview of the current situation in Afghanistan experienced by Afghan diaspora organizations, elaborates on the operation and organization of diaspora support, summarizes challenges to fund humanitarian assistance by diaspora and explores the subject of coordination between diaspora organizations and with other more traditional humanitarian actors.

This RTR of diaspora humanitarian engagement concludes that changes have taken place since 2021. Diaspora are not only encountering new difficulties to deliver humanitarian activities, but they are also in the process of adapting to these challenges. The RTR highlights how newer organizations are complementing existing DOs and providing additioality. While there remain many hurdles for diaspora humanitarian engagement, particularly in terms of transfer of funding and operations in the altered country context, there are also growing opportunities in terms of coordinating with more institutional humanitarian actors.