



DENMARK & UNDP

From Crisis to Resilience: Danish Contributions at Work in Afghanistan

Core brochure



A Shared Commitment to Dignity and Hope

Amid overlapping crises, Denmark's unwavering support has done more than help Afghans survive. It has also empowered thousands to rebuild their lives, restore their dignity, and reclaim their futures. From reviving livelihoods to targeting drug abuse and building shelters, Denmark's partnership has strengthened resilience from the ground up.

"We are not just working to survive, we are working so we can stand on our own feet, support our families, and help other women do the same. Even when everything around us feels uncertain, this business gives me purpose and hope that our lives can still move forward." — Woman entrepreneur, Herat Province



The Perfect Economic Storm

Afghanistan remains one of the world's most complex development settings. Years of conflict, economic contraction, climate shocks (including recent droughts and earthquakes), and forced returns of over 2.3 million Afghans since 2025, have left millions in protracted vulnerability.

[Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review](#) reports that in 2024:

- 75% of Afghans could not meet basic subsistence needs
- 90% of households had experienced economic shocks (up from 65% in 2023)
- Only 7% of women were employed outside the home

During these challenging times, Denmark's support has enabled UNDP to stay and deliver.

Core Funding, The Foundation Behind Every Result

Denmark's flexible core funding since 2021 strengthened UNDP programmes, many implemented with the [Danish Refugee Council](#), advancing Denmark's priorities in crisis response, livelihoods, gender equality, and innovation.

These are some of the 2024 results:

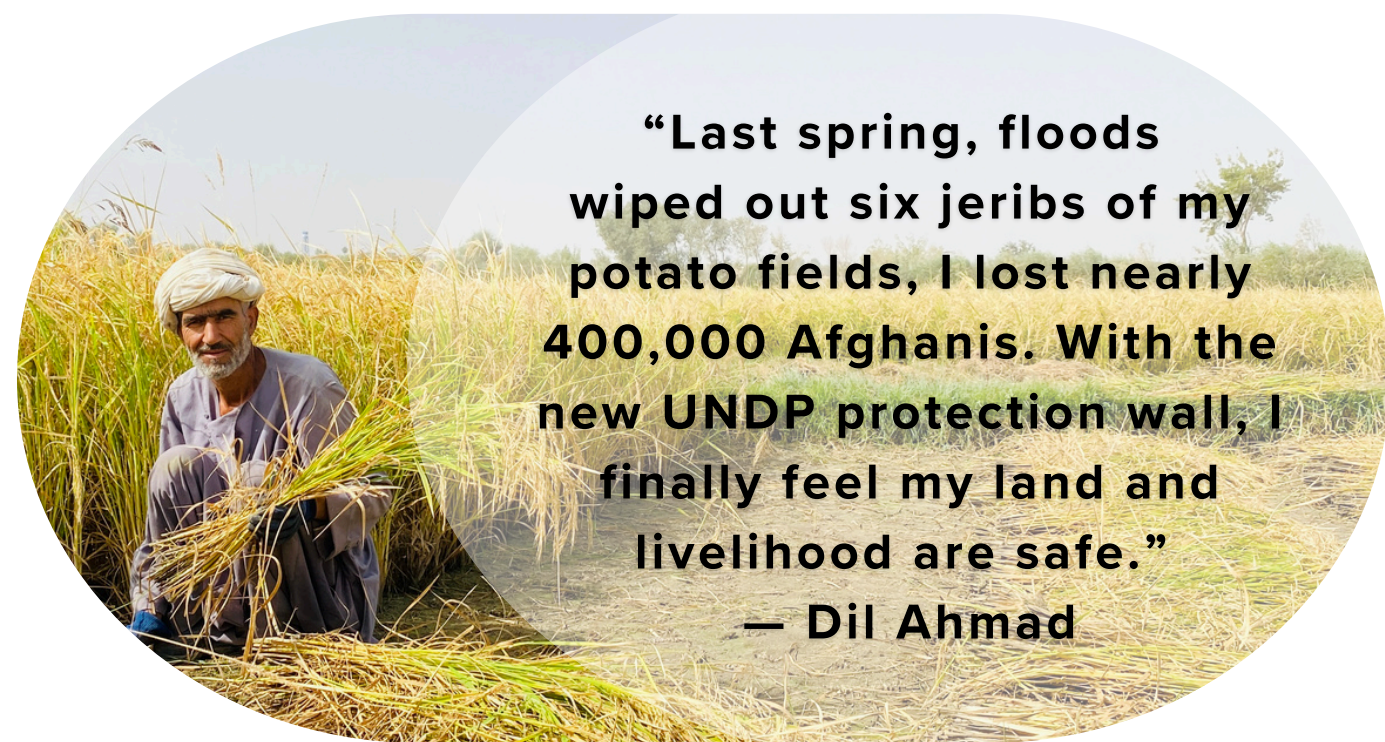
Women's Economic Empowerment

Through the ABADEI programme, UNDP is expanding women-led savings and credit groups alongside support for micro- and small enterprises. Over 400 savings groups now help women pool resources and launch businesses, and nearly 3,000 women-run enterprises are creating jobs, diversifying incomes, and strengthening community resilience.



Water Security & Flood Protection

In Garmi Abad village, Gozara district, UNDP built a siphon, protection wall and lined an irrigation canal through Cash-for-Work. The project safeguards about 600 jeribs of farmland (≈ 120 ha), ensures year-round irrigation, and paid 147 local labourers a total of AFN 2.4 million (USD 35,650). Farmer say the new siphon keeps canals clear of mud and the wall protects crops of wheat, potatoes, vegetables and melons from floods.



“Last spring, floods wiped out six jeribs of my potato fields, I lost nearly 400,000 Afghanis. With the new UNDP protection wall, I finally feel my land and livelihood are safe.”

— Dil Ahmad

Tackling Drug Use & Abuse

UNDP launched Phase 2 of a **national drug use survey**, piloted in Nangarhar and expanded countrywide, to support evidence-based policy and design of new programmes.



Supporting Returnees & Responding to Crises

In response to the large return of Afghans and multiple onset crises, with core funding, UNDP expanded support to:

- Over 1,000 returnees and IDPs providing cash-for-work to build a check dam in Kandahar that improved water access for 18,760 households via ABADEI;
- 3,188 people, who were reached with legal aid via ABADEI;
- Earthquake survivors by constructing temporary and permanent shelters in Chahak village following the 2023 Herat earthquake.

MSME Support, Youth Employment, & Digital Innovation

Core funding has enabled 4,113 MSMEs (2,979 women-led) to expand their businesses and employ additional workers. Through ABADEI, infrastructure programmes have created additional 230,285 person-days of work.

Through the core-funded “Digital Camp” and “Internships Afghanistan” programs, 200 youth (including 44 females) trained in AI and Data Sciences, and 50 (including 30 females) in soft skills and career development. Nearly 100 have since secured livelihoods.



Health, Education & Green Innovation

Through the ABADEI programme, UNDP advanced women's economic empowerment and access to essential services. **298 health centres have been solarized** and **239,750 people received health kits**. Building on this clean-energy drive, UNDP equipped the **Spinghar Plastic Recycling Factory** in Nangarhar with a 30 kW solar system, reviving operations and creating 20 jobs for displaced people while turning plastic waste into useful household goods.



As one of UNDP's top 10 core donors, Denmark helps to sustain our country presence, enables quick responses when new crises emerge, and fills critical gaps where project-specific financing falls short. While some of the progress outlined in this brochure, including the large-scale impact of the ABADEI programme, was made possible through a blend of core and non-core funding, it is essential to highlight the indispensable role of core support as catalytic seed funding for new programmes.

THANK YOU

Thanks to Denmark's flexible core contributions alongside those of other core partners, UNDP was able to stay and deliver in one of the world's most complex environments – Afghanistan.

