



HAGAR
The whole journey

Afghanistan
Annual Report
2023

Table of Contents

Word from the Country Director	3
Key Highlights	4
Heal	5
Prevent	6
Increase Capacity	7
Promote awareness	8
Empower and equip	9
Stories	10

Word from the Country Director

Dear Hagar's supporters, stakeholders, and partners,

As we look back over the last year, we are grateful to each one of you for what we have accomplished in 2023.

Afghanistan faced many challenges last year including restrictions imposed by the Taliban on women's employment and girls' education. There was also increased monitoring of national and international organizations. Hagar, like many other organizations, experienced negative impacts. Female staff are unable to work from the office and face pressure from the Taliban. Male staff also faced increased workloads and threats.

These challenges, combined with poverty and natural disasters, exacerbated the vulnerability of women and children. Hagar received more referrals of women and child survivors and the vulnerable in 2023 than in 2022. There is a greater need for support than ever before.

Despite these challenges, Hagar supported 1396 women and children who suffered from human trafficking, domestic violence, and abuse. We continued to run the only protection shelter for girls in the country and provided significant economic and psychosocial support for Afghan women, girls and boys. Hagar also responded to victims of the Herat earthquake.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to our donors, partners, Hagar's support offices and leadership, and Hagar Afghanistan staff. Without your commitment and continued support of the most vulnerable Afghan women and children, our work is not possible. I hope that we will have more achievements and successes together in 2024.

Yours sincerely,



Rohullah Ahmadi
Country Director
Hagar International Afghanistan

Highlights



113

Residential and reintegrated clients were supported with safe accommodation, education, healthcare, legal services, vocational training, and recreational activities.



280

Individuals, including community members, schoolteachers, and health service providers, received training on child rights, human trafficking, and abuse.



76

Vulnerable girls and women previously exposed to gender-based violence (GBV), trafficking, neglect, and abuse were supported with comprehensive services, with 54% successfully reintegrated into their families.



300

Women in Restoring Lives through Livelihood (RLL) were supported, creating 45 jobs and five small businesses and providing psychosocial counselling for 160 women.



327

Children across 7 districts in Kabul benefited from the Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) project, receiving quality education, recreation, awareness, and counselling.



300

Families were supported with blankets and winter clothes for women and children through the earthquake emergency response project



Heal



Comprehensive Support

113 Residential and reintegrated clients benefited from comprehensive services, including safe accommodation, education, healthcare, psychosocial counseling, legal and vocational training, and recreational activities. This approach has reduced the level of trafficking, slavery, and/or abuse in the targeted communities.



The Girls' Shelter

76 vulnerable women and girls received support from the Girls' Shelter, with 41 girls successfully reintegrated into their families. Among the cases, 23 were domestic violence and abuse, 23 were unaccompanied women and girls at high risk of exploitation on the streets, 14 were mentally and physically disabled, and 16 were deported women.



The CFS project

The Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) project's recreational activities significantly **reduced depression and anxiety among students from conflict zones in Kabul**. These resilient students faced mental health challenges due to war, conflicts, and lack of education and stable living conditions in their areas.



Psychosocial services

160 women beneficiaries in three tailoring cooperatives and cash-for-work centers of the RLL project received psychosocial services. Through 416 individual and 73 group sessions, counseling and mediation helped these beneficiaries overcome past traumas. As a result, they were able to restore their dignity and resume their normal lives.

Prevent



Forgotten No More

The Forgotten No More (FNM) Boys program empowered beneficiaries to recognize and protect themselves from exploitation by conducting training, mediation, and psychosocial activities. This approach reduces the risk of trafficking and slavery by enhancing awareness and equipping individuals with the tools to safeguard their well-being and prevent exploitation.

CFS project

The Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) project protects children by educating them about the dangers of street begging, breaking the cycle of exploitation. This approach encourages children to prioritize education over exposing themselves to exploitation.

RLL project

The Restoring Lives through Livelihood (RLL) has ensured self-sufficiency and economic empowerment for 300 women through tailoring cooperatives, job placements, and small business funding. As a result, these individuals have found their place in the market and achieved economic independence.

The Girls' Shelter

The Girls' Shelter provided comprehensive services and support to 76 women and girls facing gender-based violence (GBV), neglect, human trafficking, and sexual abuse. All victims were rescued from victimization and 41 successfully reintegrated into their families.



Increase Capacity



Conducted 13 public outreach activities for 260 influencers, religious leaders, and schoolteachers, along with one institutional outreach activity for 20 stakeholder staff on child protection against various forms of abuse, child trafficking, and child rights. These efforts, through targeted strategic partnerships, have positively impacted survivors and communities.



The Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) project organized a 5-day capacity-building training program for the project coordinator and a 10-day session for CFS teachers. These trainings greatly enhanced staff understanding of child rights and Hagar client protection policies, as well as improved their storytelling and report-writing skills.



Two trauma-informed care (TIC) training sessions were conducted for both new and existing Hagar staff to enhance the quality of services for beneficiaries. This initiative has also had a positive impact on the mental health of Hagar staff.



Strengthened the partnership with the Provincial Child Protection Action Network (CPAN) to advocate for policy changes and community initiatives that protect children's rights and prevent exploitation. Additionally, online meetings were conducted with CPAN members to engage in advocating for the identification of vulnerable children, the protection of child rights, and the prevention of child trafficking.



Promote Awareness

Conducted outreach training sessions to raise awareness on child rights, child protection, and child trafficking for 260 community influencers, religious leaders, and schoolteachers. Additionally, 13 public outreach sessions were arranged to educate the community on identifying and preventing child trafficking and various forms of abuse.

During follow-up visits with reintegrated clients and mediation sessions with residential clients' families, on-the-job training was organized to empower them to recognize and report instances of child trafficking and abuse, fostering a culture of vigilance and support for at-risk children.

The Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) project conducted a 3-day public awareness training session for 40 community leaders and parents of CFS students. This training aimed to enhance their understanding of child rights, the importance of education, and the role of parents in their children's education. Overall, the participants showed positive attitudes toward children's schooling.

The CFS teachers regularly conducted meetings with students' parents to raise awareness about personal hygiene, menstrual hygiene, and the importance of education. Many parents expressed support and appreciation for these meetings.

Empower and Equip



By providing internal and external educational and vocational activities, as well as establishing four small businesses, the capacity of all residential and reintegrated clients was enhanced. This initiative had a positive impact on the clients' behaviour, education, and life skills.



Empowered **45 residential clients** in the Forgotten No More (FNM) project through vocational training programs in tailoring and baking, enabling them to secure employment and contribute to the local economy. Additionally, in collaboration with the Child Protection Action Network (CPAN), facilitated access to entrepreneurship and job placement opportunities for elder reintegrated clients, fostering their economic independence.



Through the Restoring Lives through Livelihood (RLL) project, **300 vulnerable women were empowered** through tailoring cooperatives, job placement, and small businesses. These women were provided with tailoring sewing machines, industrial machinery, and related accessories. As a result, they were connected with the wholesale market and achieved a sales milestone of 1 million AFN in turnover.



The RLL project conducts training on business development and market linkage for all tailoring cooperatives and small business beneficiaries. This enhances their capacity to manage and sell cooperative products in the wholesale market, as well as improves overall cooperative and small business management.



The CFS project established 12 education centres in Kabul to educate 327 internally displaced children who lacked schooling in their home provinces. In coordination with the line ministry, the project provided these children with quality education, including proper learning materials and recreational items, as well as winter clothing such as boots and jackets.



Sheela's Story

Sheela was a victim of forced marriage and severe domestic violence. Eleven years ago, Sheela took a bold step and divorced her husband. After the divorce, Sheela learned she was pregnant. With no one to support her or her daughter, Sheela moved back to her parents.

But her parents pressured Sheela to give her daughter to her ex-husband and get remarried. Traumatized from her first marriage, Sheela has refused to remarry. Instead, she's chosen the challenging route of living with her daughter alone.

Living alone was a struggle for Sheela. the community's strict rules often left her unable to find food for her and her daughter.

Through RLL, Sheela has been able to rebuild her life and find hope in the darkness. Individual counselling

sessions helped Sheela work through her trauma. She was admitted to Tailoring Cooperative which provides a monthly stipend for six months.

Equipped with tailoring skills and a sewing machine, Sheela started her own business.

With Hagar's support, Sheela learned tailoring skills, bought a sewing machine, and started her own business. Today, she is a skilled tailor who works in the tailoring cooperative every day sewing clothes to sell in the market. She has a sustainable income from her tailoring business.

Before she joined the RLL project, she was not able to provide food and shelter for herself and her daughter. Now, Sheela is providing education and all the necessities of life to her daughter and enjoys an independent life now that she has shelter and can afford three meals a day.

SHAISTA'S STORY

Before joining Hagar Child-Friendly Spaces, Shaista was prevented from schooling due to conflict in her home province. She sold plastic bags on the street and polished people's shoes to support her family.

She was at high risk of exploitation and experienced severe trauma.

Through CFS, Shaista received educational services, recreational activities, and winter clothing and boots.

She now lives in Kabul with her family and is studying grade four in Hagar's Child-Friendly class.

At first, Shaista was very disappointed by not being able to read or write. Through her hard work, dedication, and opportunity, she is now a top student in her class and has a dream to continue her schooling. She has learned to manage her trauma and hopes for a better future. She loves education and dreams of being a teacher in the future and educating vulnerable children like her.



Brothers Mahdi and Sharif are now safe from abuse

Mahdi and Sharif grew up in Iran where their father worked as a mason to support their family. Their mother died giving birth to their sister who is now 12.

But when their father disappeared one night and never returned, the three kids quickly fell into vulnerability.

Mahdi and Sharif were horrified when patrons of the burger shop offered to pay them and their sister for sexual favours.

Fortunately, a local attorney got the police involved. The police referred Mahdi and Sharif to Hagar's Boys Recovery Shelter.

“The support we received has not only brought us safety and a sense of belonging but has empowered us to build a better future for ourselves and to be independent.”

- Kim

Mahdi began working at a barbershop and later at a burger shop to earn money. The burger shop owner allowed them to stay in a makeshift room in his yard.

“We continued working at the shop ever day, but our situation deteriorated and we had nothing to survive,” says Mahdi.

In the boys' shelter, Mahdi and Sharif received comprehensive care. Their confidence grew and they excelled in school. Now, they aspire to become engineers or doctors to help needy children in the future.

Mahdi and Sharif are also mentors for other boys in the shelter, passing on their knowledge and skills to others in similar situations.



HAGAR

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