



REHABILITATION PATHWAY TO MOBILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

ICRC'S PHYSICAL REHABILITATION
PROGRAMME IN AFGHANISTAN



ICRC

INTRODUCTION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been providing physical and social rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in Afghanistan since 1988. Recognizing the profound impact of decades-long armed conflict and limited health-care infrastructure, the ICRC developed a comprehensive programme to support people with disabilities. This programme is run through seven physical rehabilitation centres in Faizabad, Gulbahar, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Lashkar Gah and Mazar-i-Sharif.

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

Each year, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) supports more than 200,000 individuals with disabilities in Afghanistan through its comprehensive Physical Rehabilitation Programme. This multifaceted programme encompasses a wide range of activities, aiming not only to restore physical mobility but also to promote the social and economic inclusion, and fostering people with disabilities active contributions to their communities.

The programme provides physical rehabilitation services including the fitting of prosthetic and orthotic devices, personalized physiotherapy sessions, and regular home visits to monitor patient progress and ensure continuity of care. Beyond physical rehabilitation support, the ICRC is committed to encourage long-term independence and social inclusion by offering tailored interventions in areas such as education, vocational training, microfinance opportunities, and employment opportunities. Additionally, the programme promotes participation in sports and recreational activities as a means of empowerment, confidence-building, and social connection.

JAN-DEC 2024



215,274

Patients Assisted



11,055

Home Visits Were Carried



4,253

Prosthetics Manufactured



29,780

Orthotics Manufactured



3,140

Wheelchairs



23,639

Walking Aids



348,820

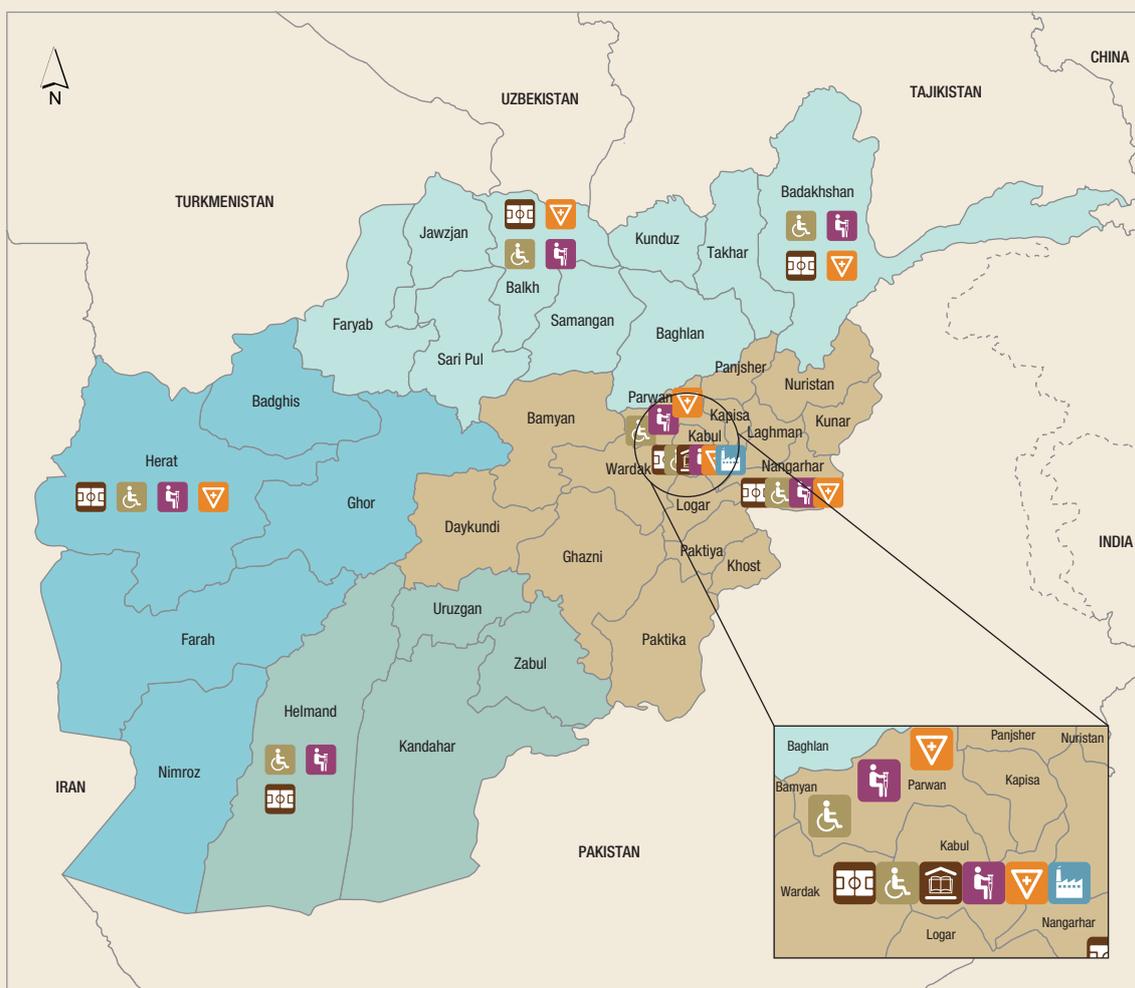
Aids for Daily Living Products



325,313

Physiotherapy Sessions

ICRC PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME ACROSS AFGHANISTAN



Legend

- Adaptive sports for people with disabilities
- Component factory for assistive devices
- Physiotherapy
- Prosthetics and orthotics
- School of prosthetic and orthotic
- Socio-economic inclusion

- North Region
- Central Region
- South Region
- West Region
- Province
- Contested borders
- Defined Boundaries

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FAIZABAD

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



17,899
PATIENTS ASSISTED



303
PROSTHETICS



2,112
ORTHOTICS



134
WHEELCHAIRS



1,360
WALKING AIDS



13,347
AID FOR
DAILY LIVING
PRODUCTS



50,993
PHYSIOTHERAPY
SESSIONS

MEHRNAZ

A FACE THAT SHINES WITH HOPE

After days of relentless rainfall, an old muddy wall in Mehrnaz's home collapsed on her leg, crushing it beyond repair. The pain was sharp, but the deeper wounds were yet to come. At the time, Mehrnaz had no understanding of what it meant to live with a disability. She didn't grasp how her world — once full of movement, play, and possibility — had suddenly changed.

Mehrnaz visited the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre in Faizabad, Badakhshan, and received a prosthesis. Today her life has taken a positive turn and for the first time, she can stand and walk on her own.

Mehrnaz is now looking forward to running and playing with other children. With every step she takes, she moves forward on the path toward a brighter future.

"Seeing Mehrnaz's happy face makes all our efforts worthwhile," says Husna Walizada, prostheses and orthoses technician in Faizabad.

Mehrnaz's story is a symbol of hope and how physical rehabilitation can change a child's life.

GULBAHAR

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



 **14,633**
PATIENTS ASSISTED

 **242**
PROSTHETICS

 **1,491**
ORTHOTICS

 **171**
WHEELCHAIRS

 **1,198**
WALKING AIDS

 **10,429**
AID FOR DAILY
LIVING PRODUCTS

 **20,168**
PHYSIOTHERAPY
SESSIONS

SODABA

DISPLAYING STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

In 2014, Sodaba's life took a devastating turn when a road accident left her with a spinal cord injury that paralysed her trunk and lower limbs. "As weeks turned into months, my condition worsened. Pressure sores developed and became a painful reminder of my immobility and growing despair. Each passing day seemed to deepen my sense of loss and isolation. I felt trapped in a cycle of helplessness," says Sodaba.

She turned to the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre in Gulbahar, Kapisa, and followed an intense routine to stand and walk again. But regaining mobility was only part of her journey. Sodaba also joined the ICRC's social reintegration programme and finished high school after five years of studying from home. Her passion for serving people then led her to pursue a profession in health care.

Today, Sodaba works as a receptionist at a government hospital, using her experience and strength to support others.

HERAT

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



 **46,556**
PATIENTS ASSISTED

 **520**
PROSTHETICS

 **6,496**
ORTHOTICS

 **300**
WHEELCHAIRS

 **7,339**
WALKING AIDS

 **42,279**
AID FOR DAILY
LIVING PRODUCTS

 **55,550**
PHYSIOTHERAPY
SESSIONS

TAMIM

DETERMINATION AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Tamim, 14, was born with a congenital physical disability that left both his legs deformed. His condition worsened as he grew, with one leg being shorter than the other by 11-centimetres which made mobility increasingly difficult.

“In 2017 my family sought help from the ICRC’s physical rehabilitation centre in Herat. I was given a custom-designed orthosis for my left leg, correcting both the difference in length and the deformity. It wasn’t just a piece of supportive equipment – it was a lifeline,” says Tamim. He could walk better and his independence, which had seemed so far out of reach, was suddenly within his grasp.

Encouraged by the centre’s staff, Tamim also enrolled in an English language course to hone his skills. After finishing the first grade, he was directly promoted to the third grade and is now a proud student of the fifth grade.

Tamim’s journey reminds us that with the right support and unshakeable determination, people can overcome any obstacle. He now marches toward more opportunities and success.

JALALABAD

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



 12,224
PATIENTS ASSISTED

 856
PROSTHETICS

 580
ORTHOTICS

 275
WHEELCHAIRS

 882
WALKING AIDS

 37,666
AID FOR DAILY
LIVING PRODUCTS

 10,519
PHYSIOTHERAPY
SESSIONS

ATA URAHMAN SHINWARI

FROM STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS

Living with polio since childhood, Ata Urahman Shinwari is familiar with different challenges all through his life. But having to rely on a wheelchair for mobility has not stopped him from working hard to improve his life. He sought help from the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre in his city and received support to cover his university fees and transportation costs. This enabled him to graduate with a bachelor's degree in computer science.

Later, Ata Urahman completed an apprenticeship in mobile phone repairing through the ICRC's vocational training programme for people with disabilities. He then put his skill to work and set up his own workshop. Ata Urahman also secured a loan from the ICRC to establish a sustainable business and support his family.

"Thanks to the ICRC, I no longer feel alone. I received help to rise above my challenges and now I stand tall in my own way," he says.

LASHKAR GAH

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



19,189
PATIENTS ASSISTED



393
PROSTHETICS



1,425
ORTHOTICS



418
WHEELCHAIRS



2,763
WALKING AIDS



38,680
AID FOR
DAILY LIVING
PRODUCTS



20,766
PHYSIOTHERAPY
SESSIONS

ABDULLAH

FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH

Abdullah, 42, lives in Sangeen district of Helmand Province with his family of nine children. In 2010, while he was working on his farm a deafening blast suddenly threw everything into chaos and left him unconscious.

When Abdullah regained consciousness, he was in the hospital facing the devastating reality that both his legs had to be amputated – one above the knee and the other below the knee. He returned home after a month of medical treatment in Helmand and Kabul, physically shattered and emotionally overwhelmed as his life had changed forever in just a moment.

Unable to walk and confined to his seat, he felt helpless. “I thought about how I would provide for my family and how life would ever return to normal,” he says.

Abdullah saw a glimmer of hope as his friends recommended him to visit the ICRC’s physical rehabilitation centre in Lashkar Gah. He made the journey and received his first wheelchair and two custom-fitted prosthetic legs. Equipped with new limbs, he returned to his fields to support his children and rebuild his life. Each step was a triumph for him.

Since that pivotal moment, Abdullah has received eight sets of artificial limbs through the ICRC’s continued support. “I thought I would never be able to walk again, let alone work in the fields. But the ICRC gave me my life back,” he says.

MAZAR-I-SHARIF

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



34,877

PATIENTS ASSISTED



812

PROSTHETICS



5,644

ORTHOTICS



560

WHEELCHAIRS



4,625

WALKING AIDS



52,414

AID FOR
DAILY LIVING
PRODUCTS



81,435

PHYSIOTHERAPY
SESSIONS

HAMIDA

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY TO EMPOWER OTHERS

Hamida lives in Mazar-i-Sharif, where the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre has been supporting people with disabilities since 1990.

Affected by polio in her childhood, she has been living with a disability. Walking is difficult for her, even though prosthetic limbs provided at the centre eased her mobility. Hamida also bears the responsibility of raising her children alone, with no one else to lean on.

Though life felt like an uphill battle, Hamida refused to let despair define her future. Introduced to the social rehabilitation department of the centre in Mazar-i-Sharif, she enrolled in a one-year tailoring course and went on to open a tailoring shop to earn an income and care for her children.

As business picked up, her shop soon became a catalyst of empowerment. For the past two years, Hamida has been employing other women with disabilities at her shop, sharing her skills and teaching them to stitch clothes.

Her journey is a striking example of how determination, paired with compassionate support, can overcome even the greatest challenges.

KABUL

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTER

JAN-DEC 2024



 **69,896**
PATIENTS ASSISTED

 **1,127**
PROSTHETICS

 **12,032**
ORTHOTICS

 **1,282**
WHEELCHAIRS

 **5,472**
WALKING AIDS

 **154,005**
AID FOR DAILY LIVING PRODUCTS

 **85,882**
PHYSIOTHERAPY SESSIONS

GUL WAZIR AND FATIMA

A FATHER'S LOVE AND A DAUGHTER'S FIGHT

In a small village in eastern Afghanistan, Gul Wazir's life revolves around his daughter, Fatima. She was only eight months old when he noticed her struggle with movement. Fatima is suffering from cerebral palsy (CP), a condition that affects muscle control and coordination.

Determined to help her walk and live a better life, Gul Wazir tirelessly searched for suitable treatment. After several months, he came across the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre in Kabul, a four-hour journey from their home. "I had to find a way to help her. I could not afford treatment abroad, but I could not afford to give up either," he says.

At the centre, Fatima began receiving rehabilitation services, including physical therapy designed specifically for children with cerebral palsy. Her progress, though gradual, has been bringing immense joy to Gul Wazir. "Seeing her improve is the best thing that could happen to me," he says.

Many other children across Afghanistan have stories like Fatima's. Over 26,890 patients with cerebral palsy are currently receiving treatment at the ICRC's seven physical rehabilitation centres across the country which offer free and comprehensive therapy services.

SPORTS

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

The ICRC's Physical Rehabilitation Programme manages across the country four gymnasiums and two open courts where athletes with disability can practice sports, mainly wheelchair basketball, futsal and volleyball. Sport has proved to be the perfect combination of physical rehabilitation and social inclusion. Together with fun, it boosts the physical well-being of the players, their self-esteem and self-confidence.

MOHAMMADULLAH AHMADI

JOURNEY FROM BLAST VICTIM TO CAPTAIN OF NATIONAL TEAM

When he was just 14 years old, Mohammadullah Ahmadi was left paralysed from the waist down by a bomb explosion outside his father's shop in Kabul. He began his recovery with the help of the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre, where he received not only physical care but also the hope and tools to rebuild his life.

In 2010, wheelchair basketball became his passion. He thrived as a player and coach, eventually becoming the captain of Afghanistan's National Wheelchair Basketball Team. He proudly represented his country in international competitions in China, Indonesia, Italy, Lebanon and Thailand, as well as in numerous national events.

Today, the 46-year-old serves as an example of dedication and the power of sport for social integration. "I am happy with my life now," he says.

Engaging in sports helps people with disabilities to experience their residual capacity and how that can increase through practice. This restores hope and triggers the will to rebuild their life.



SPORT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION IN 2024

985 number of individual participants in disability sport programming

363 patients included in the Vocational Training program

1,616 persons with disability receiving a micro-loan

317 home-bound children with severe disability benefitted from home tuition

1,937 Young students with disabilities received school stationary and fees for various courses

97 students with disabilities received a university scholarship

9 students with disabilities received regular transportation fare to school, courses, and university

37 persons with disability have been employed

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

Recognizing the need for socio-economic inclusion of people with disabilities who are affected by armed conflict or violence, the ICRC provides them with access to education, employment opportunities, interest-free microcredit loans, vocational training and sports.



MAHFOUZA

STRUGGLE TO EARN A LIVELIHOOD

Mahfouza is among the millions of people in Afghanistan in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Decades of armed conflicts, natural disasters and economic challenges have fuelled poverty across the country as people struggle to find ways of earning a livelihood. Among those worst-affected are children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

It has been a long time since Mahfouza, a person with disability and mother of two living in Faizabad, saw a banknote. Pushed into poverty and without any means of earning a livelihood, she says they neither have enough food to eat nor enough clothes to wear. A neighbour gave some of their used clothes to my children. They have to share it among themselves – one wears the shirt, while the other wears the trousers,” she says.

Responding to the economic hardship, the ICRC provides financial support to people with disability who are breadwinners for their families but have no means of livelihood. In 2024, 6,483 people with disability (5,141 male and 1,342 female) received cash assistance under the ICRC’s safety net programme to meet their basic needs.

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