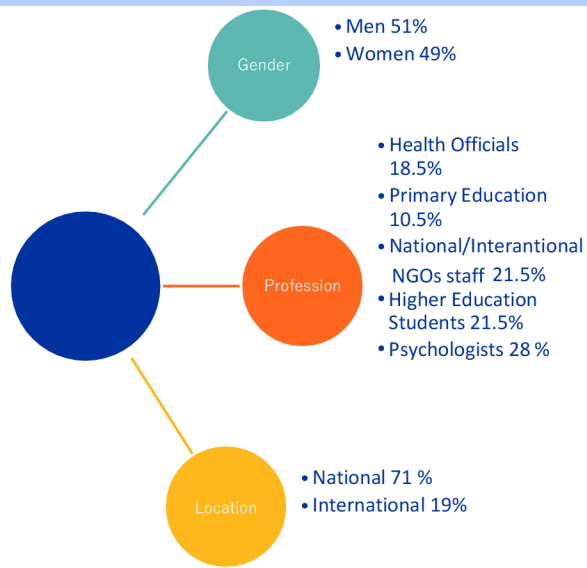




# OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH OF DISPLACED AFGHANS:2023



The International Conference “Fostering Empowerment Through Psychological Care, Safety and Protection Among Displaced Afghans” that occurred at Serena Hotel, Peshawar, was jointly conceptualized by UN International Organization of Migration and National Institute of Psychology, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. For details visit (<https://shorturl.at/cPY25>). This conference was the outcome of discussions and recommendations from the first jointly organized international conference held on March in Serena Hotel, Islamabad (<https://conference.nip.edu.pk/Conference2023/index.html>). Experts in the field suggested to take measures to address psychological needs for displaced Afghans and vulnerable host communities, including children, youth, and women and formulate strategies to provide protection and care in emergency situations, by focusing at specific geographical locations. Hence, this conference was built around this very concept, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) being the selected venue.



Demographics of Participants (141)

## CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), is a key border crossing area, where there is a flow of vulnerable Displaced Afghans entering with limited resources with deprived and stigmatized status. Conference activities included pre-conference workshop, that was held on first day of the conference, followed by a second day of keynote/guest speeches, panel discussion, and oral and poster presentations from different disciplines. All activities were focused to emphasize the impact of trauma and displacement on mental health of Displaced Afghans and how safety, control, and protection can be restored to add predictability in their life.



Prof. Dr. Rubina Hanif addressing in Inaugural Ceremony.



Participants actively listening the panel discussion during conference



Dr. Gul, IOM National Program Officer, evaluating the poster presentations.



Researchers discussing "Structural and Social Determinants of Mental Health of Displaced Afghans".

Students displaying social dellimas faced by displaced Afghans through artwork.

Panel discussion

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were outcomes of the conference, that can contribute to planning future MHPSS actions for Displaced Afghans and host communities:

1	KPK Government are welcoming NGOs and researchers to share their ideas and they will help in graduating efforts through collaborations on innovative workable evidence-based ideas which can be materialized for the welfare of displaced Afghans.
2	Training modules for health and mental health workers are required to be designed and implemented quickly guide in addressing the needs of displaced Afghans who are victims of trauma, stigmatization, violence, and discrimination. They must be taught in how to reinstate protection and safety in respective sectors. Higher education institutes like National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University can be assigned this task.
3	Improvement on shared, updated research is also needed, for demographic details to better assess the current gaps and needs, aid in immediate and careful planning and implementation of interventions .
4	Governmental and nongovernmental sectors funds and services management that need to be monitored and evaluated by a focal or central body, with the aim to meet set goals through calculated and graduated efforts.
5	Carefully designed initiatives are mentioned below and include comprehensive community-based programs and addressing health and mental health issues at primary, secondary and tertiary level, through interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches:
	I. Evidence-based research in which academic sector can be engaged.
	II. Need assessments, along with program monitoring and evaluation in different phases to assess feasibility, readiness to develop and implement program and success after pre-defined timelines. and evaluating
	III. Awareness/training programs need to be started (traditionally media-based) to change the public's attitude based upon stigmatization and discrimination towards displaced Afghans.
	IV. Multidisciplinary approach- involving health-, shelter-, and food-based needs by engaging respective sectors.
	V. Mental health services need to be aptly provided along physical health care by designing easily manageable systems, one such example is a health card.
	VI. Engage host communities and government through policy making for safeguarding basic human rights-based services accessible to displaced Afghans.
	VII. Enhance education and skills-based trainings opportunities for displaced Afghans. Like designing culture sharing activities and engage Afghan artisan including women actively.
	VIII. Engage with displaced Afghans and host communities in the implementation of programs and various activities undertaken to address element of language and cultural barriers