



Trachoma Elimination in Afghanistan

Across Kunar and Samangan provinces

Background

Country

Afghanistan

Population

Kunar & Samangan
provinces

Duration

May – September 2025

Donors

Fred Hollows Foundation

Trachoma, a neglected tropical disease and the leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide, continues to pose a significant public health challenge in several parts of Afghanistan. Caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*, trachoma spreads through direct contact with eye and nasal discharge from infected individuals, particularly children, or indirectly via flies and contaminated materials. Recurrent infections lead to scarring of the inner eyelid, which can ultimately cause irreversible blindness if left untreated.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with international and local partners, has initiated efforts to assess disease prevalence, scale up mass drug administration (MDA), improve access to surgical services for trichiasis cases, and promote hygiene and environmental changes in affected communities, such as facial cleanness practices.

Despite these efforts, substantial gaps remain in disease mapping, treatment coverage, and community engagement. HealthNet TPO aims to support a comprehensive and sustainable approach to trachoma elimination in Afghanistan, leveraging evidence-based strategies and fostering local ownership to achieve lasting impact.

Objectives

To eliminate Trachoma as a public health problem in the eight endemic districts in Kunar and Samangan provinces through:

- Mass Drug Administration (MDA)
- Promoting the facial cleanliness and environmental improvement interventions

Past projects

Since 2016, with the support of the Fred Hollows Foundation, HealthNet TPO's previous projects on eyecare have significantly contributed to reducing the prevalence of avoidable blindness and visual impairment in the target provinces.

Core Activities

- Staff recruitment for the Trachoma program
- NTTF meeting to plan for national program launch
- Program launch at national, provincial and districts level
- Establish office/warehouse in Kunar and Samangan provinces
- Develop and contextualise the IEC materials related to WASH, encompassing facial cleanliness, environmental improvement, access to clean drinking water, and the MDA/trachoma program
- Design and develop messages related to MDA/trachoma program, F&E and clean water, for radio and television ads
- Develop brief and concise messages (Pashto and Dari) to disseminate in Juma Prayers
- Develop and print messages for banners, leaflets, flyers, posters (different sizes)
- Design and purchase vests and caps for community distributors

With support from



HealthNet TPO

is an international non-profit organisation that works on the structural rehabilitation of health systems in fragile states. Our mission is to strengthen communities to help them regain control and maintain their own health and wellbeing.

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