

Expanding Primary Health and Immunisation Services in Eastern and South-Eastern Afghanistan



Country
Afghanistan

Location
Khost, Kunar, Laghman
and Nangarhar Provinces

Duration
Jan 2026 - Dec 2026

Donor
Gates Foundation

Background

Immunisation is a cornerstone of public health, significantly reducing morbidity and disability among children and women. While polio is close to global eradication, Afghanistan is one of the only two endemic countries, requiring sustained and targeted efforts to interrupt transmission. Despite recent improvements, routine immunisation coverage gaps persist in high-risk and hard-to-reach districts, particularly in Eastern and Southeastern Afghanistan, leaving communities exposed to poliovirus and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Persistent pockets of unvaccinated children under five and women of childbearing age continue to undermine progress towards polio eradication, particularly along epidemiological corridors in Eastern and Southeastern Afghanistan. In these areas, access constraints, misinformation and limited trust in health services contribute to vaccine hesitancy and refusals, reducing uptake. Strengthening routine immunisation, expanding equitable access and investing in community-based engagement approaches are therefore critical to protecting child health and supporting national and Global Polio Eradication Initiative priorities.

Objective

To increase demand for and equitable access to routine immunisation and polio vaccination for children under five and women of childbearing age, reduce vaccine refusals and strengthen community trust, while delivering integrated primary healthcare services in selected districts of Khost, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar provinces.

Activities

- Vaccinate and follow up children under five who have missed vaccinations.
- Strengthen routine immunisation services at health facilities by supporting staff and making vaccines available.
- Collaborate with provincial health authorities to assure accessible vaccination services delivered by health facilities and mobile services.
- Organise mobile and outreach health camps in high- and medium-risk areas to bring basic healthcare and immunisation services closer to communities with limited access.
- Carry out community engagement and awareness activities, including dialogue sessions and household-level counselling, to address misinformation and build trust.
- Establish and support community-based mechanisms to engage vaccine-hesitant families and coordinate local responses.
- Engage religious leaders, community elders and local stakeholders to promote immunisation and support behaviour change.
- Train health workers and supervisors on service delivery, communication, community engagement and use of health data.
- Coordinate closely with government health authorities and partners to align activities and avoid duplication.
- Ensure vaccines, medical supplies and cold chain equipment are delivered on time.

With support from **Gates Foundation**



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