

Improving Eye Care Access in Afghanistan

Kabul and four provinces in eastern and south-eastern Afghanistan



Country
Afghanistan

Location
Kabul & four provinces in eastern
and southeastern Afghanistan

Duration
Jan 2025 - Dec 2026

Donor
Fred Hollows Foundation

Background

Eye health in Afghanistan has long been underfunded, leaving the country without sufficient workforce and infrastructure to meet the growing need for public eye care services. Existing eye care facilities are concentrated in central areas and a few major cities, with only 9 out of 34 provinces having established eye care centres.

Afghanistan's population of around 42 million has a cataract surgical rate (CSR) of just 700 per million, significantly below the WHO-recommended rate of 3000 per million. Cataracts account for 60% of vision loss cases, yet 77% of individuals affected cannot access treatment due to high costs and limited availability. Rural and remote regions are particularly underserved, with approximately 25,000 Afghans losing vision in one eye annually, a condition that disproportionately affects women.

HealthNet TPO, with the support of the Fred Hollows Foundation, has been working since 2016 to enhance eye screening, treatment, and the promotion of eye health for vulnerable populations. Key interventions include support for the Kabul Medical University Eye Hospital and outreach eye camps in remote areas to provide cataract surgeries and other essential services.

Objectives

The project aims to increase access to quality eye care services for people living in Kabul, eastern, and south-eastern provinces. The project has the following objectives:

- To provide eye care OPD and cataract surgeries services via five target hospitals in Kabul, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces.
- To provide eye care OPD and cataract surgeries services in the remote and underserved provinces through outreach eye camps.
- To provide pharmaceuticals and medical equipment to the target eye wards and hospitals.
- To conduct cataract surgery outcome monitoring in the target hospitals for quality improvement.
- To build the capacity of health workers on eye health care.

Activities

- HealthNet TPO will coordinate outreach camps in targeted rural and remote communities.
- Provide eye health care services through static hospitals in Kabul, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces.
- Supply pharmaceuticals and medical equipment to the camps and target hospitals.
- Train project staff on eye care nursing, social norms, and child protection.
- Celebrate World Sight Day at both central and provincial levels.
- Train 194 primary health care staff on primary eye health care in Khost, Kunar, and Laghman provinces.
- Supply required primary eye care equipment to 162 health facilities in Khost, Kunar, and Laghman provinces.

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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