

WHY AFGHANISTAN?

Afghanistan has known little else but war for over 30 years. Fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes, seeking shelter with host families or in informal settlements. Aid organisations responding to the needs of the population are constantly challenged by the on-going insecurity.

In 2017, 1.3 million Afghan children under five in Afghanistan are in need of treatment for acute malnutrition¹. Poor feeding practices, limited access to safe water, poor hygiene, and a lack of sanitation facilities compound acute malnutrition rates creating a serious malnutrition situation in many parts of the country.

In places where access to safe water is limited, water is collected from unprotected sources such as rivers or poorly protected wells, putting entire communities at risk of waterborne disease. Environmental disasters add an additional challenge for Afghan families and contribute to food insecurity and chronic malnutrition, as farmers struggle to grow food on land affected by flash floods, drought, and landslides. This year, nationally, 3.4 million Afghans are severely food insecure².

Medair has been working in Afghanistan since 1996, responding to the needs of some of the most vulnerable and difficult-to-reach communities in the country.

WHERE WE HELP

In **Kandahar Province** communities have limited access to nutrition services, nutritious food, and safe water. Medair provides relief to affected families in the region through assistance that simultaneously treats acute malnutrition cases while reducing the risk of future malnutrition through addressing underlying root causes.

Medair also provides relief in remote areas of the mountainous **Central Highlands**, where hard-to-reach communities are vulnerable to environmental disasters such as flooding and drought. Food shortages occur often, harsh winters block access to markets for months at a time, and access to safe water and latrines is limited.

In **Kabul** Medair has begun a project to ensure access to lifesaving nutrition services through the establishment of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) services in clinics within the city.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Nutrition for Children and Mothers

Malnutrition is high among children under five in Kandahar, but families are often unable to access health and nutrition services due to ongoing insecurity, costs, and cultural barriers. Medair runs mobile nutrition clinics in conflict-affected and remote communities to treat malnutrition and related underlying illnesses in children under five.

- We provide outpatient treatment for severe (SAM) and moderate acute (MAM) malnutrition;
- We provide referrals to an established and pre-determined health facility in cases of severe health complications;
- We promote healthy feeding practices to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and mothers of malnourished children.

Water Wherever You Live

Medair provides safe water and latrines to urban and remote villages and schools, and teaches communities about health, hygiene, and sanitation.

- We construct and rehabilitate protected water points in villages and schools;
- We build school latrines, and encourage and train households to build their own latrines;
- We provide hygiene training and promotion in schools and with families;
- We train and work with village water committees, pump mechanics, and water-point caretakers to independently maintain water facilities in the future.

¹ 2017 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview

² 2017 WFP Afghanistan Country Brief (July)

Growing Food in Harsh Conditions

Frequent natural disasters mean communities in the Central Highlands struggle to grow enough food. Medair works in remote farming communities, helping families farm sustainably, eat a more varied diet, and prevent the environmental hazards that threaten their livelihoods year after year.

- We train farmers in improved crop and land management;
- We provide natural disaster affected farmers with seeds and fertilizer to restore their livelihoods;
- We provide agriculture dependent natural disaster affected families with cash support to purchase food for winter;
- We train women to grow kitchen gardens;
- We train men and women about household nutrition- including practical demonstrations on preparing and preserving nutritious foods available in local markets or through kitchen gardening.

FUNDING PARTNERS

Global Affairs Canada (formerly DFATD) in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee, Swiss Solidarity, the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), and generous private donors.

IMPACT IN 2016:

- 145,993 people directly benefitted from Medair's programmes
- 62,997 children were screened for malnutrition
- 32,265 adults were reached with health and nutrition messages
- 9,491 children were treated for acute malnutrition at 35 mobile nutrition sites
- 32,810 people in the Central Highlands and Kandahar received hygiene kits and training to prevent disease
- 1,856 women received training and seeds to begin their own kitchen gardens benefiting 14,848 people
- 1,700 families received cash assistance to help purchase food in winter, benefitting 13,162 people
- 224 famers received fungal-resistant wheat seed and fertilizer, with instructions on their use
- 561 men participated in cash-for-work activities, building contour trenches and catch dams
- 40 boreholes with hand pumps were installed, improving safe drinking water access for 12,400 people
- 2,646 household latrines were built after households received guidance on latrine construction
- 561 cash-for-work participants were reached with hygiene promotion.

"Where other NGOs stop their work, Medair starts their work. We cannot give you anything but our thanks for coming to these areas. We are poor and we are remote, but you have improved life for us in this village. Thank you." - Sadiqi, a father of four, who took part in a Medair cash-for-work programme in the Central Highlands

For Media

For more information from HQ in Switzerland, please contact: Nath Fauveau, Press Relations (English, French, German), nath.fauveau@medair.org, +41 (0)78 635 30 95

Web: medair.org | Twitter: [@MedairInt](https://twitter.com/MedairInt) | Facebook: facebook.com/pages/Medair/



*As part of a farmer training programme, a farmer and his wife receive fertiliser for the spring planting period in the Central Highlands.
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*A child drinks safe water from a water point in the Central Highlands.
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*A child is fed a high-calorie foodstuff used to treat malnutrition at a Medair nutrition clinic in southern Afghanistan.
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