



SAVING LIVES AND PROMOTING HEALTH IN AFGHANISTAN 2023–2026



PROJECT TITLE

Driving Action for Wellbeing to Avert Mortality (DAWAM)



PEOPLE REACHED

Total 2,825,870 (incl. 3,110 people with disabilities) -
Women: 1,476,513; **Men:** 1,348,757
Girls: 763,035; **Boys:** 718,667



TIMEFRAME

October 2023 – March 2026



LOCATIONS

7 Provinces - Herat, Faryab, Badghis, Badakhshan, Ghor, Nanghar, Daykundi & Kabul



PARTNERS

Lead: World Vision UK;

International Partners: Action Against Hunger (AAH), Action Aid (AA), BBC Media Action (BBC MA); World Vision Afghanistan (WVA);

National Partners: Nai Qala Association (NQA) Women's Education Centre (AWEC), Agency for Assistance and Development of Afghanistan (AADA)



DONOR

Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)



GOAL

Improved health services resulting in fewer deaths in women, girls and high-risk groups (including persons living with disability), in Afghanistan



Context

Afghanistan is a complicated place to run humanitarian and development projects, a place struggling to overcome the impact of 40 years of conflict. Alongside this, humanitarian crises related to the impact of climate change, including floods and droughts and natural disasters like earthquakes, make life challenging.

Following the international withdrawal in August 2021, the economy collapsed and remains fragile. The country relies heavily on humanitarian aid. Increasingly restrictive policies affect the rights and freedoms of women and girls in education, work and more.

Also of concern is the long-term displacement of an estimated 6.3 million Afghans, while 23.7 million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance.

Since August 2021, World Vision Afghanistan has supported over 5 million Afghans, around half of whom are children. More than 2 million people have received cash, food and livelihood support, while almost as many have accessed healthcare and nutrition. In addition, over half a million people now have better water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

BELOW: Ali Mohammad and his children share their joy over the newly constructed water network at their home, part of a project to provide 311 families in the village with reliable access to safe drinking water, significantly improving their health and well-being. ©2024 World Vision

The DAWAM project

The DAWAM (Driving Action for Wellbeing to Avert Mortality) project, led by World Vision UK, involves four international and three local partners. Together, we contribute to increasing the wellbeing of women, girls and other high-risk groups, including people living with disability, in seven provinces plus Afghanistan's capital, Kabul.

DAWAM which runs from October 2023 to March 2026, is funded by the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. DAWAM partners are working in some of the most remote and hard-to-reach areas to provide access to inclusive healthcare, nutrition and WASH services for over 4 million people, including 1.5 million children.

Objectives:

- Improve access to equitable, inclusive and safe local health and nutrition services for high-risk groups. This includes women and children, as well as persons living with disabilities.
- Maintain the health, dignity, and protection of marginalised communities, and high-risk groups, through access to equitable and adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.
- Enhance local ownership through training and strengthening partner organisations and volunteers who will stay and continue the work beyond the life of the programme.



- Conduct research and create resources to inform and educate communities on a range of health topics.
- Ensure that we meet our obligation to be accountable to affected communities by sharing information on the programme and engaging with the communities to hear and respond to their feedback.

Impact

In the first year, the project through local partners reached **2.8 million people**, this included over

- 📉 **140,000** people using health and nutrition services;
- 🏠 **6,000** people gaining psychosocial support;
- 🚰 **12,000** people receiving WASH interventions;
- 🏠 **10,000** people helped in humanitarian responses to scabies and floods;
- 📻 **2.7 million** through mass awareness raising on health, hygiene and child protection through radio broadcasts.

BELOW: A female healthcare colleagues reaching children in a remote community in Faryab, bringing services and hope to those who would otherwise not have access to healthcare. ©2024 Azizullah Hayat/World Vision



Nasima's story

Nasima*, a mother of nine, attended a World Vision health facility in Faryab province with her daughter Najiba*. After four rounds of treatment for malnutrition, Najiba recovered. Then, two months later, she required treatment for pneumonia. Integrated health services saved Najiba's life and meant Nasima could avoid taking out a loan for transport and treatment.

"If we couldn't make it to a clinic in time, our children could die," Nasima says. "We are very grateful for the services of this clinic. We kindly request that it continues to operate for a longer period, so we and others in the community can continue benefiting from its health services. Without this clinic, we would have no choice but to endure more suffering, as we cannot afford transportation or treatment elsewhere."

(Nasima, project participant)

BELOW: Nasima receives medicine for her daughter Najiba. She highlights the crucial role that the World Vision clinic plays in her community. "The clinic's support is lifesaving. It truly serves as a beacon of hope." ©2024 World Vision * names changed to protect identity

Gulsom's story

In Gulsom's village in rural Daikundi, a small clinic provides basic health services, but its limited resources often fail to meet the most critical needs.

"When the clinic can't help, we have no choice but to take our sick family members to Nili [the provincial capital]"

explains Gulsom, a mother of seven. Reaching Nili, however, is an immense challenge. The unpaved, mountainous roads make the journey treacherous and winter conditions worsen the difficulties. Like most families, Gulsom relies on agriculture for income. However, frequent droughts and climate shocks have left their harvests barren, pushing the families closer to despair. Her husband, despite living with a disability that limits his ability to work, tirelessly cultivates their small plot of land, to sustain their family. New health centres and water networks are being planned by DAWAM to provide essential health and nutrition. Gulsom is also a participant in DAWAM's hygiene promotion sessions, conducted by the Nai Qalah Association, a local Afghan organisation.

"Now, we've learned how to protect ourselves and our children from diseases by practicing proper hygiene." says Gulsom.

Abdul's story

In Faryab province where DAWAM is working Abdul's wife Freshta* was rushed to a clinic, about to give birth. After a few hours his daughter was born safely under the care of trained staff. Forty-two-year-old Abdul is now a father of five – four daughters and one son. "I feel blessed and happy," he says. The atmosphere is one of relief and celebration, but it could have ended very differently.

Abdul is a daily labourer with an insufficient income. The majority of villagers are farmers earning barely enough to survive. If a family member fell ill, financial constraints often limited their ability to seek treatment. Children and pregnant women suffered the most due to lack of access to healthcare services.

"Because we didn't have a clinic in our village, mothers and their babies would suffer, and in some cases, they would lose their lives"

says Rahela*, Freshta's sister.

Mortality rates among women and children in the village remained high until recently, when World Vision Afghanistan established a clinic under the DAWAM project. During her pregnancy, Freshta received essential healthcare services and counselling from the clinic. She was also enrolled in the nutrition programme, receiving nutrition packages including items like soap and water purification tablets, Ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) or fortified biscuits to combat acute malnutrition, and supplements such as Iron, folic acid, and multivitamins to prevent deficiencies. Freshta also received breastfeeding support along with other mothers to ensure the well-being of both mother and child.

The entire family is grateful for the support they received. **"If this clinic wasn't here, Freshta would have had to deliver at home," Rahela adds, "which would have put both the mother and baby at risk."**

BELOW (LEFT): Gulsom and other participants in DAWAM's hygiene promotion sessions. ©2024 Ria Mohammad Rehaa/World Vision

BELOW (RIGHT): Abdul who is happy after hearing his wife Freshta and newborn child are healthy. ©2024 Ria Mohammad Rehaa/World Vision * names changed to protect identity





Learning and next steps

DAWAM is saving lives through healthcare provision and WASH, aligned to World Vision's global goal: the sustained wellbeing of children especially the most vulnerable. It is a valuable part of the ongoing humanitarian response in Afghanistan and is well-placed to make lasting impact over the course of the project and meet the expectations of people we are reaching like Nasima and Gulsom and their families.

World Vision is committed to learning lessons from the communities we serve and DAWAM is already applying the following lessons:

Localisation

DAWAM Partners are committed to learning and adapting to deliver the best we can for the people of Afghanistan. An important aspect of this is championing 'localisation' through building the capacity of local partners and cross-learning between international and local partnerships. This includes training sessions, collaborating and learning from each other. Through these sessions, local partners are able to strengthen their organisational systems and practices and gives them equal voice and participation in the project.

DAWAM partners, International and local alike have equal weight within the steering committee, based on "one member, one vote".

Inclusion

A key focus next year will be on meeting the needs of people living with disabilities and those suffering from mental health problems. The project is also trialling new ways to improve nutrition within families, including kitchen gardens, cooking sessions at health facilities and distributing seeds.

Technology

The DAWAM dashboard is a web-based mechanism which shares key project information on the project including health, nutrition, WASH and safeguarding achievements. It is expected that this will a) save time as the number of requests for information reduces; b) enables dialogue with donors, especially as DAWAM seeks to develop donor relationships beyond FCDO and increase its influence and engagement within the relief and development sector in Afghanistan.

ABOVE: The rural Daikundi landscape, central Afghanistan, one of the project locations. ©2024 World Vision

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ADA Agency for Assistance and Development of Afghanistan

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

Afghan Women's Educational Center AWEC

Nai Qafa

BBC MEDIA ACTION

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At World Vision, our focus is on helping the world's most vulnerable children overcome poverty and experience fullness of life. For over 70 years, we have worked together with communities – of all faiths and none – even in the most dangerous places, inspired by our Christian faith

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COVER PHOTO: Sher Ali holds his 18-month-old daughter Zulaikha during a visit to the health centre. Zulaikha was severely malnourished, causing her growth to stall. Unsure of the cause, Sher Ali took her to a World Vision clinic, where she was enrolled in a nutrition program. After receiving the proper care, Zulaikha gradually recovered. ©2024 World Vision

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