



Fact Sheet

Improving Maternal and Child Health in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the deadliest places on earth for women and children. Consider:

- Only 14 percent of births are attended by a skilled healthcare worker
- It has the second-highest maternal mortality ratio in the world: 1,900 deaths per 100,000 live births
- 70 pregnant women die each day, often during childbirth
- One in four children will not live to see their fifth birthday

To improve the lives of women and children in Afghanistan, the Abbott Fund has partnered with Direct Relief International and the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) to help reverse the country's high maternal mortality rate and increase the survival and overall health of infants and children. The Abbott Fund's support is part of its efforts to invest in creative programs that advance access to health care around the world, focused on finding sustainable solutions to make a lasting impact on people's lives.

AIL was founded by Nobel Prize nominee Sakena Yacoobi, a longtime advocate for women's rights in Afghanistan. With three clinics serving mostly rural areas (two in Herat province, one in Kabul province), AIL is staffed and operated by Afghan women, providing health services and education both within the clinics and through their mobile outreach program.

The Abbott Fund has focused its support on empowering Afghan women through the training of female midwives to provide skilled assistance during labor and delivery, as well as care for infants and children. In addition, the Abbott Fund supports AIL's three clinics to ensure quality patient care and services. To date, 78 women have completed their training, with most now employed in clinics and hospitals.

To help expand AIL's health education efforts, the Abbott Fund also supports five-day community health workshops that provide basic health education to women within their communities.

To date, the Abbott Fund has given more than \$564,000 in grants to AIL and assisted in coordinating \$4 million in product donations from Abbott, including rehydration solutions, antibiotics, multivitamins and nutritional supplements. Direct Relief, a global humanitarian relief organization, assists with program management, including overseeing the distribution of Abbott Fund's grants and Abbott's product donations to AIL.

Results to Date

Since the partnership began in November 2005, progress has been significant, with more than 437,000 women and children receiving services from AIL.

- 280,000 women have attended health education classes in clinics and in the community
- 152,000 patients have received vaccinations
- 50,000 courses of treatment have been provided through Abbott product donations
- 84,000 children have received nutritional assessments
- 64,000 women have received reproductive health services
- 1,024 women have participated in twelve community health workshops