

# Afghanistan



**International Medical Corps was established in 1984 by volunteer doctors and nurses to address the critical need for medical care in war-torn Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation.**

More than 35 years later we are still there, delivering services that improve the health, livelihoods and

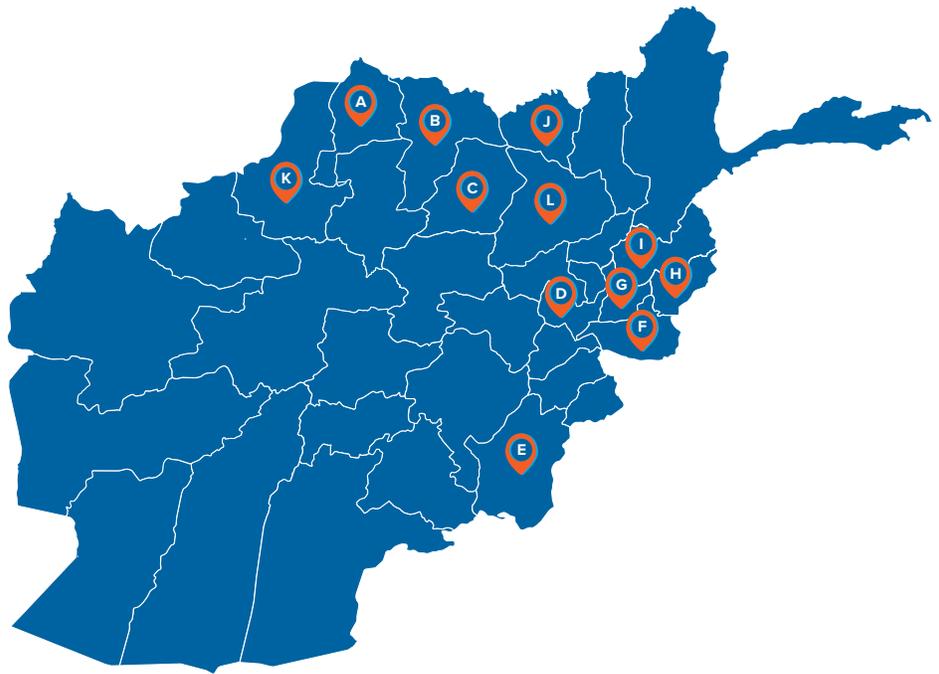
social standing of nearly 6 million people. International Medical Corps operates a broad range of assistance programs for Afghanistan's most vulnerable groups, including the internally displaced, refugees, returnees, host communities, women and children. Our main activities in Afghanistan include providing primary and secondary healthcare, training, education, emergency response, disaster resilience, gender-based violence (GBV) services, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and community empowerment.

Decades of uninterrupted civil war, and the lack of education and employment opportunities for women, have taken their toll on Afghanistan's population and health infrastructure.

Continued armed conflict makes security tenuous for civilians, who often find it difficult to obtain basic services when much of the country is inaccessible due to rugged terrain, poor infrastructure and unstable security conditions.

Despite the security challenges, International Medical Corps has supported Afghanistan's healthcare needs for more than 35 years.

Current programs across Afghanistan include primary healthcare, WASH, GBV services and emergency response, including non-food items, tents, winterization kits, cash and steps to achieve disaster risk reduction. We are also well-positioned to support the nascent peace process in Afghanistan by providing assistance to areas formerly controlled by armed opposition groups.



## WHERE WE WORK

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>A</b> JAWZJAN   | <b>G</b> LAGHMAN  |
| <b>B</b> BALKH     | <b>H</b> KUNAR    |
| <b>C</b> SAMANGAN  | <b>I</b> NURISTAN |
| <b>D</b> KABUL     | <b>J</b> KUNDUZ   |
| <b>E</b> PAKTIKA   | <b>K</b> FARYAB   |
| <b>F</b> NANGARHAR | <b>L</b> BAGHLAN  |

**6** Health Facilities

**12** Health Posts Throughout Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, International Medical Corps' programs have improved the health of approximately 90,000 children under the age of five.



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

International Medical Corps is implementing a relief program for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the four eastern provinces of Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar. The program includes several key activities, including:

- ▶ Working with other humanitarian actors to conduct joint needs assessments of conflict-affected IDPs
- ▶ Responding to critical winter-related needs of eligible IDPs by providing cold-weather clothing and blankets, cash for winterization assistance, and prepositioned non-food items
- ▶ Supporting disaster- and conflict-affected IDPs and host communities by mainstreaming protection and awareness activities, conducting post-distribution monitoring activities and tracking the distribution and reserve supplies of key items
- ▶ Collaborating with Afghan provincial- and national-level departments, UN agencies and other stakeholders

## INTEGRATED HEALTH CARE AND NUTRITION

International Medical Corps uses mobile health units to provide primary and community health services in Kabul Province for internally displaced people. In 2019, we provided 23,954 health consultations and distributed messages heightening awareness of GBV issues, as well as the importance of sexual and reproductive health, to 6,826 individuals.

Our work in these areas has helped reduce suffering among those affected and improved the capacity of health facilities to respond effectively during disasters.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

International Medical Corps works to discourage attitudes and behavior that contribute to incidents of GBV in Afghanistan. We also use targeted social- and behavior-change activities, such as community dialogues and awareness sessions about GBV and other issues—such as mother and child health, vaccination and human rights—to achieve this goal and reduce the stigma of survivors.

The current government program to address GBV issues serves four provinces—Kabul, Balkh, Samangan and Jawzjan—ensuring that both medical and psychosocial support are available to GBV survivors through health facilities and community-based support mechanisms. In partnership with the Ministry of Public Health, we are developing a capacity-building plan to continue key GBV activities in targeted communities. In 2019, we trained more than 1,000 health workers and other key actors on GBV-related issues, established Family Protection Centers, and registered and managed 4,884 GBV cases.

In other GBV-related activities, we:

- ▶ Provide mobile GBV prevention and response services. International Medical Corps has established 26 mobile teams in six provinces, each consisting of two psychosocial counselors (one male, one female), a midwife and two community mobilizers (one male, one female). Mobile teams make it possible to reach remote areas where many of the returnees and IDPs are scattered. The teams engage in prevention and response work in these communities, conducting awareness-raising activities and providing mobile psychosocial support services to men, women and girls.
- ▶ Conduct awareness sessions. Our community mobilizers work to increase knowledge of GBV services, raising awareness within communities about GBV issues and the services available to address them.

- ▶ Organize community dialogues. International Medical Corps engages with influential groups—including community elders, school principals, religious leaders and others—to organize community dialogues on GBV and other issues of interest.
- ▶ Establish and support a network of community focal points. We identify one male and one female in each community willing to volunteer as focal points for referrals of GBV survivors for psychosocial support.
- ▶ Provide GBV case management. Because we recognize case management as a key component of our response to GBV, our mobile teams provide non-medical case management to GBV survivors according to the basic steps of Inter Agency Steering Committee guidelines.
- ▶ Offer referrals. As a part of our effort to ensure safe referrals, the team works closely with key actors, including local health facility staff, community focal points, our mobile psychosocial support and counselling teams, and Family Protection Centers in each province, to protect anonymity and arrange discrete referrals.





## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

International Medical Corps provides emergency WASH services to Afghan IDPs, returnees, host communities and refugees crossing from Pakistan into the Torkham, Achin and Batikot districts of Nangarhar province, and the Barmal district of Paktika province. In 2019, more than 120,300 people received hygiene-awareness instruction at the household, community, school and health-facility levels. We also built more than 455 latrines, drilled 150 boreholes, five strategic boreholes and trained 10 WASH committees.

## RESEARCH FOR HEALTH IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES (R2HC)

This research, carried out in South Sudan and Afghanistan through a partnership between International Medical Corps and Columbia University, will contribute to the evidence base and existing guidelines for post-abortion care (PAC) in humanitarian crises. Together with other ongoing research, it will help us better understand overall trends regarding access to—and use of—PAC services in these settings.



**International  
Medical Corps**

[www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org](http://www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org)

A pre-eminent first responder for 35 years, International Medical Corps provides emergency relief to those struck by disaster, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions, working with them to recover, rebuild and, through training, gain the skills and tools required to achieve self-reliance.

March 2020

**COUNTRY CONTACT:** Mark Ward, Country Director  
[mward@InternationalMedicalCorps.org](mailto:mward@InternationalMedicalCorps.org)

**HEADQUARTERS CONTACT:** Claire Gaulier, Program Manager  
[cgaulier@InternationalMedicalCorps.org](mailto:cgaulier@InternationalMedicalCorps.org)

**HEADQUARTERS:** 12400 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1500 | Los Angeles, CA 90025  
**PHONE:** 310-826-7800 | **Fax:** 310-442-6622

**DC OFFICE:** 1313 L St. NW, Suite 110 | Washington, DC 20005  
**PHONE:** 202-828-5155 | **Fax:** 202-828-5156

**UK OFFICE:** Ground Floor 161 Marsh Wall | London E14 9SJ  
**PHONE:** +44 (0) 207-253-0001