



FINAL REPORT

SECTORAL PROGRAMME





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CONTRIBUTING DONORS



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PARTICIPATING UN ORGANIZATIONS



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World Health Organization



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Programme Title & Project Number	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s)/ Strategic Results		
Programme Title : Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital	Country: Afghanistan Region: Central		
MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 131696	Priority areas/Strategic Results: United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA): Outcomes 1 and 3		
Implementing Partners	 Outcome 1: Sustained Essential Services Outcome 3: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law 		
Please refer to PUNO-specific reports			
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)	Programme Duration		
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Agency Contribution: N/A	Start Date 01.01.2022		
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Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.	Report Submitted By		
Assessment/Review - if applicable please attach Yes No - February 2024 Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable please attach Yes No	o Name: Hiroko Massey o Title: Trust Fund Manager o Participating Organization (Lead): WHO o Email address: hiroko.massey@undp.org		

^[1] The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the <u>MPTF</u> <u>Office GATEWAY</u>

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFGA	Afghan Family Guidance Association
DfA	De facto Authorities
DaO	Delivering as One
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HMIS	Health Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
IP	Infection Prevention
IPD	Inpatient Department
IYC	Integrated Youth Centre
JP	Joint Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
OPD	Outpatient Department
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PUNO	Participating United Nations Organization
RH	Reproductive Health
DTC	Drug Treatment Centre
SBM	Standard Base Management
FHH	Family Health House
STFA	Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
TEF	Transitional Engagement Framework
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSFA	United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan
WHO	World Health Organization
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To address the critical situation following the power shift in August 2021 and prevent the collapse of Afghanistan's healthcare system, the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) implemented a Joint Sectoral Project (JP) called 'Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital'. The STFA Steering Committee approved the project in April 2022, allocating a total budget of US\$3,627,046. Running from 1 May 2022 to 31 December 2023, the primary objective of the project was to ensure the uninterrupted provision of specialized paediatric health services at Ataturk National Children's Hospital.

Ataturk National Children's Hospital, located in Kabul, is a 200-bed tertiary care facility that caters to the healthcare needs of thousands of children and young people from Kabul and 33 provinces across Afghanistan. The project focused on various activities aimed at improving healthcare practices, equipping the hospital with modern equipment and supplies, ensuring the availability of medical resources, expanding bed capacity, enhancing the technical capacities of medical personnel, establishing an Integrated Youth Centre (IYC), and improving water and sanitation systems. With the timely intervention, the project provided financial support for the salaries of 257 staff members from June 2022 to December 2023. This support prevented adverse impacts on the health of children who received healthcare services as outpatients or inpatients (180,628 outpatients and 16,702 inpatients). The project expanded the hospital's service portfolio, including enhanced diagnostic capabilities, outpatient support for severely malnourished children, and echocardiography services. It also activated the infectious diseases department and broadened laboratory services by providing state-of-the-art equipment and essential reagents, resulting in improved diagnostic capabilities. The overall enhancement in patient care facilities enabled the hospital to better serve its patients. Notably, the procurement and operationalization of 10 neonatal beds marked a significant advancement in catering to the needs of vulnerable newborns requiring specialized care. The renovation of the centralized oxygen system ensured a reliable oxygen supply to each bed, contributing to improved patient outcomes and safety.

According to the final review, during the course of the project, from June 2022 to December 2023, patient access to healthcare services increased by 195 percent for outpatients and 31 percent for inpatients. The overall bed occupancy rate rose from 58 percent in 2021 to 81 percent in 2023, demonstrating significant progress in maximizing bed utilization. The hospital's performance in major surgeries improved by 58 percent throughout the project. Patient surveys indicated that 92 percent of respondents considered that they received the healthcare services they required. These positive changes have elevated Ataturk Hospital's reputation as a leading referral centre, with a 324 percent increase in inbound referral cases, highlighting its expanding role in providing specialized medical expertise and comprehensive healthcare services.

The Joint Sectoral Programme exemplified the benefits of the STFA's foundational 'Delivering as One' (DaO) modality, with three UN agencies working together in a complementary and synergistic manner. The collaboration capitalized on each agency's comparative advantages and areas of expertise, resulting in greater value for end-users at a larger scale and delivering a higher programmatic return on investment compared to uncoordinated stand-alone interventions. In December 2023, the hospital was handed over to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and continues to remain functional. However, it faces challenges such as shortages of medicine and consumables and difficulties in meeting staff salaries from the MoPH's ordinary budget.



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PURPOSE

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PURPOSE

In response to the potential collapse of Afghanistan's healthcare system after the power shift in August 2021, the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) approved the Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital Joint Sectoral Programme (JP) in April 2022. With a budget of \$3,627,046, the project aimed to support Ataturk Hospital, the second-largest national paediatric referral hospital in Afghanistan. The hospital, which had 200 beds and 252 healthcare workers, was on the verge of suspending its services.

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Implemented from 1 May 2022 to 31 December 2023, the JP had multifaceted objectives that included ensuring equitable access to healthcare services, enhancing the quality of clinical and patient care, and improving the capacities of healthcare professionals. To achieve these goals, three main outputs were identified:

- Operationalizing Ataturk Hospital and improving the technical capacities of medical personnel, including doctors and nurses.
- Establishing an Integrated Youth Centre (IYC) to enhance access to information and raise awareness about healthy lifestyles, reproductive healthcare services, COVID-19 prevention, and gender-based violence (GBV) for vulnerable individuals.
- Improving water and sanitation facilities and systems in the hospital.

In 2023, the STFA aligned its efforts with the priorities outlined in the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA) to support strategic and systemic programming and implementation. The JP at Ataturk Hospital focused on the priority of Sustained Essential Services (STFA Output 1) in line with the UNSFA. The project leveraged the expertise and complementarities of Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs). The JP officially began with a focus on addressing priority areas identified during a scoping assessment. Initially planned to run for five months until the end of May 2023, the project was extended from July to December 2023. WHO provided operational support for the month of June, while programme funds for the Integrated Youth Centre ended in May.



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RESULTS

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OUTCOMES

The JP's contributions directly aligned with two of the three main outcomes outlined in the UN's Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF): Outcome 2 - Sustain essential services, and Outcome 3 - Preserve social investments and community-level systems necessary for meeting basic human needs. In 2023, the JP also aligned with two priorities of the UN Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (UNSFA): Priority 1 - Sustained Essential Services, and Priority 3 - Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law.

During the implementation period from May 2022 to December 2023, the STFA intervention provided vital support to Ataturk Hospital, ensuring its continued operation and preventing its potential collapse. With the exception of June 2023, when WHO provided independent operational support, the hospital received full support under STFA. This support enabled the hospital to offer comprehensive outpatient and inpatient services, including diagnostic and laboratory services. The financial assistance provided by STFA, particularly for staff salaries, played a crucial role in averting the collapse of this vital national asset. The impact of the intervention was significant, as it prevented adverse effects on the health of 180,628 children (50.2% female) who received essential healthcare services during this period. Furthermore, the JP made significant improvements to the hospital's water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and amenities. These improvements greatly enhanced overall hygiene and sanitation standards within the hospital, ensuring a safer environment for patients, staff, and visitors.

The achievement of social cohesion was facilitated through the establishment of the Integrated Youth Centre (IYC). The IYC played a crucial role in promoting positive behavioural change and resilience among adolescent and youth groups at the community level. Through innovative approaches that involved amplifying the voices of young people and promoting collaboration with adults, the Centre became a space for addressing the challenges faced by young individuals. Integrated into one of the largest referral hospitals in Afghanistan, the Centre provided convenient access to adolescents and young people who visited the hospital with their families. Throughout the implementation period, the centre reached 47,373 young people (23,761 female) through activities such as awareness raising, counselling, referrals, and intergenerational dialogues. Importantly, the centre also reached young people who were unable to physically access its facilities.



'DELIVERING AS ONE' FOR AFGHANISTAN



Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital STFA Report Card - 2022+2023







People benefited from Integrated Youth Centre 47,373



OUTPUTS

The JP contributed to STFA integrated results Output 1: Essential services and community infrastructure including for health, agriculture, education and energy supply are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men. This included a focus on Output 1.1: Essential basic services and infrastructure (health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), solid waste management, education etc.) are functional including COVID-19 support and the establishment of youth centres.

SUPPORT TO THE MAIN OPERATIONS OF THE HOSPITAL

From 2022, STFA's support played a crucial role in ensuring uninterrupted essential health services at Ataturk Hospital. Such support was critical at a time when the hospital faced the risk of fully suspending services, amidst the socio-economic crisis confronting Afghanistan. A comprehensive intervention plan was meticulously developed based on a thorough needs assessment, which identified critical gaps and requirements in the hospital's operations. The plan was executed with precision, implementing vital activities to address these needs. These activities included infrastructure renovations, capacity building initiatives, and ensuring the timely provision of salaries to all hospital personnel. Additionally, effective space management strategies were implemented, ensuring optimal utilization of available resources.

To further enhance the hospital's capabilities, STFA facilitated the procurement and renovation of both medical and non-medical equipment. This included the acquisition of high-tech echo and ultrasound machines, as well as four baby warmers and two baby incubators, which are essential for providing specialized care to infants. Furthermore, the installation of oxygen points throughout the hospital premises was carried out, ensuring a reliable supply of this critical resource. Maintenance and repair work were conducted on all equipment in the blood bank and laboratory, guaranteeing their proper functioning. In an effort to streamline administrative processes, an electronic attendance machine was introduced. Additionally, washing and drying machines were provided, contributing to improved hygiene practices within the hospital.

STFA also focused on ensuring the availability of necessary medical and food supplies. This entailed procuring essential items to meet the hospital's ongoing demands. Through these comprehensive interventions, Ataturk Hospital was equipped with the resources and support needed to deliver uninterrupted and quality healthcare services to its patients. Significant achievements were made under this component in 2022 and 2023.

In 2022, the following key accomplishments were registered:

- 38,977 children (16,128 female, 22,849 male) received Outpatient Department (OPD) healthcare services, including the provision of medicines.
- 17,972 laboratory tests and 2,663 radiology procedures were conducted through the in-house laboratory services, eliminating the need for outsourcing.
- 3,240 children requiring urgent and extended healthcare support were admitted to the hospital and provided with necessary services, medical supplies, and meals.
- 257 hospital personnel, including doctors, assistant doctors, lab technicians, nurses, pharmacists, and administrative and support staff, received monthly salaries.
- 185 referral patients with complex prognoses received healthcare services.
- 338 patients diagnosed with critical health conditions received surgical services.
- 385 hospital staff members received training on general awareness, patient handling, and radiology. Additionally, 11 certification courses were conducted for 109 personnel at the French Medical Institute for Child Health (FMIC) Hospital, enhancing their skills.

- Essential pharmaceuticals and supplies, including medicines and surgical supplies, were procured and managed through a stock inventory system, ensuring optimal availability.
- Almost all patients received prescribed medicines free of charge.

In the reporting period of 2023, the following achievements were recorded:

- 141,651 children (67,105 male, 74,546 female) received OPD healthcare services, including free provision of medicines.
- 13,462 children (8,176 male, 5,286 female) were admitted (in-patients) and received necessary healthcare services and food.
- 1,628 children (991 male, 637 female) received surgical services (operations).
- 97,884 tests, including inpatient and outpatient pathology tests and blood bank numbers were conducted at the laboratory.
- 10,328 radiology procedures, including X-rays and ultrasound imaging tests, were performed for both inpatient and outpatient departments.
- 257 hospital personnel, including doctors, assistant doctors, lab technicians, nurses, pharmacists, administrative, and support staff received monthly reimbursement/salaries.

These achievements demonstrate the success and impact of the programme in improving healthcare services and ensuring the well-being of children in the region.

STANDARDIZING THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES



Female beneficiary at Ataturk hospital in Kabul city

During the implementation period, standardizing the quality of healthcare services involved:

- Improving staff attendance by using modern technology,
- Improving patient and staff flow by enhancing staff workspaces and distributing services rationally,
- Improving managerial decision-making by strengthening Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes, and,
- Establishing an HMIS committee and providing terms of reference.

Quality assurance, patient safety and clinical services improvement was also assured by:

- Conducting a hospital Standard Base Management (SBM) baseline assessment[2].
- Activating a hospital patient's safety committee.
- Standardizing hospital practices and capacity building to improve infection prevention (IP) in clinical and non-clinical areas, including waste management.
- Establishing a hospital council and seven fully functional hospital committees covering HMIS, mortality, drugs and therapeutics, fee-taking, administration, capacity building, and IP.
- Improving hospital administration by capacity development of managerial staff.
- Improving supply chain and pharmaceutical management to ensure timely availability and decrease medication harm.
- Developing a new pharmacy database and entering all pharmaceutical items.
- Improved nursing and clinical care through in-service training.[3]

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT



Female beneficiary at Ataturk hospital in Kabul city

During the implementation period, improving infrastructure and equipment involved:

- Implementing hospital space management best practices. This included reallocating the HR section, the infectious/isolation ward, the intensive care unit (ICU), the blood bank, and establishing a paediatric preoperation room and a dedicated biomedical workshop. Renovations and rearrangements were also made to the patient waiting area and the outpatient consultations section, and 11 toilets were renovated, and two toilets constructed.
- Much needed equipment such as oxygen points, echo and ultrasound scanners, security cameras, air conditioners and stabilizers, electronic attendance machines, washing and drying machines, and laptops and printers, were also provided along with maintenance and repair of medical equipment including all equipment in the blood bank and the laboratory. In addition, four baby warmers and two baby incubators were provided for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and 20 soiled linen trolleys were made to allow proper segregation, collection and transportation of hospital linen such as bed sheets and patient gowns.

ESTABLISHING AND SUPPORTING AN INTEGRATED YOUTH CENTRE

Female beneficiaries in Youth Centre in Kabul

An Integrated Youth Centre (IYC) was established and fully operationalised in the Ataturk Hospital compound. In total 47,373 young people (23,761 female) benefited from services offered at the IYC, including awarenessraising sessions on topics such as Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) for girls, mental health, family planning, HIV/AIDS, negative effects of using drugs, nutrition, and Child Marriage (CM); health counselling, referrals and youth-led initiatives.

A key achievement of the IYC is successful engagement with peer educators and volunteers. More than 280 female and male volunteers led youth initiatives and conducted community health awareness sessions and peer education activities. The trained peer educators played a key role in prompting the IYC activities and reaching out to the most marginalized adolescents and youth in their communities. This significant increase in awareness-raising efforts is attributed to the impactful design of the project, wherein trained youth transition into volunteer educators, disseminating their acquired knowledge within their communities. This innovative approach empowers adolescents and youth to become agents of change, effectively sharing valuable information and insights with their peers.

WASH SYSTEM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENTS

Following a needs assessment and a procurement process, in 2023, 14 rooftop solar water heaters were installed (against a target of seven) and plumbed into washing facilities and bathrooms, 15 toilets were repaired, 12 sinks for handwashing were installed in wards and other critical areas and waiting areas, and six filtered drinking water points and 12 water dispensers were provided. In addition, an improved water tank system was installed, 70 hand sanitizing points were provided across various wards (against a target of 50), and 60 small dustbins and six large dustbin trailers were supplied to safely transfer waste to the waste collection area. Addressing another required essential need for the hospital, the sewerage system was emptied and cleaned, and minor renovations and plumbing work completed on sink installations, including handwashing facilities in existing kitchens. Furthermore, a new waiting area comprising four rooms and bathrooms was constructed, along with enhancements to staircases, and piped water provided to develop green garden areas in the hospital.



The doctor is treating the child at Ataturk hospital in Kabul city

CHALLENGES

During the implementation period, several challenges were identified that warrant attention:

- Short-term project-based support to the hospital raises concerns about the continuity of services. It is crucial to address this issue and ensure sustained support to maintain the delivery of healthcare services.
- Recurrent costs, such as staff salaries and operational expenses, require continued support considering the
 nature of the assistance provided under the JP. It is important for concerned PUNOs to continue to advocate
 among relevant stakeholders to ensure adequate resources continue to be allocated to cover these costs in a
 sustainable manner.
- The fluid scope of tertiary care services being made available poses challenges for financial and resource planning. Establishing more permanent guidelines and frameworks (while retaining minimum flexibility) for tertiary care services will facilitate better planning and resource allocation.
- Providing tertiary care requires significant resources to meet the expectations of patients, caregivers, families, and staff. It is essential to identify sustainable funding sources and efficient resource management strategies to address this challenge.
- Meeting the demands of clinical personnel for additional resources and modern biomedical equipment remains a continuous challenge over time. Efforts should be made to address these demands and ensure that healthcare professionals have access to the necessary tools and equipment for quality patient care. This calls for relevant PUNOs to continue to engage in advocacy with the relevant stakeholders.

DfA-announced restrictions: While the restrictions announced by the de facto authorities (DfA) on women working in NGOs in December 2022 did not directly impact operations at Ataturk Hospital due to healthcare sector exemptions, it did temporarily disrupt the operations of the IYC and limited awareness-raising and community mobilization activities. To adapt to the circumstances, the IYC adopted two approaches to provide services: beneficiary access within the hospital and outreach to youth in universities. Amendments were made to the implementation methodology, incorporating online group calls on platforms like WhatsApp and implementing smaller scale interventions with adolescent girls and young women in their communities. Additionally, considering the sensitivity of the Afghanistan context and the restrictions imposed by the DfA, the program names and approach were modified. The subsequent programmes were named 'Youth Friendly Health Services' and 'Peer Education Training' to align with the local context. The JP also explored additional activities to meet the demands of young people and expanded IYC services to include training on life skills, employability, and vocational skills, which were not initially within the scope of the programme. These efforts demonstrated the effectiveness of IYC services in addressing the aspirations and needs of adolescents and youth.

LESSONS LEARNED

Limited and unpredictable funding: The management of a tertiary care hospital presents unique challenges compared to primary and secondary healthcare facilities, primarily due to the diverse nature of staff and services involved. To address this issue, it is important for relevant PUNOs to continue to advocate for more stable financing model that guarantees a predictable and long-term flow of resources. Such a model will be crucial in preventing interruptions in the delivery of hospital services.

Adaptive and agile programming: During the 2023 reporting period, health counselling services underachieved, with the AFGA reporting a lack of demand from young people. In response, the IYC model is currently undergoing a thorough review to align it more effectively with the needs and aspirations of youth. Hospital management is actively exploring the possibility of transitioning to a multi-purpose youth centre that provides a broader range of services, including livelihood support, psychosocial assistance, and health awareness raising activities. This strategic shift aims to create a more comprehensive and engaging platform that better meets the diverse needs of young individuals.

RISK ANALYSIS

During the implementation, none of the risks identified in the risk management framework of the project document materialised. However, based on the developments related to the ban on women I/NGO workers imposed in December 2022, the following risk was identified.

No	Risk Description	Туре	Rating	Owner	Response Planned
1	Women, female adolescents and/or girls may not be able to access, or easily access, services provided by Ataturk hospital and the IYC due to possible further restrictions imposed by DfA (on women's movements, or on service providers).	Contextual (Political)	Likelihood: Moderate to Likely Consequence: Major Rating: Moderate to High Impact: Deteriorating health outcomes among women, female adolescents; girls Increased incidents of poor family planning, unwanted pregnancies, and STDs due to a lack of safe, and accessible, spaces for awareness raising, sensitization, counselling and psychosocial support.		Design alternative (contingency) modalities for the delivery of services – e.g. telemedicine (when feasible/appropriate); deployment of health mobile teams; increased use of social media and mainstream media for advocacy, sensitization and public awareness campaigns Continue to strongly advocate (alongside medical personnel of the hospital) for the need to ensure that women, female teenagers and girls continue to have unimpeded access to services provided by the Hospital and IYC

Table 1: Risks that were identified.

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The coordination mechanism and collaboration established and maintained under the STFA JP between WHO, UNFPA, and UNDP from the start of programme implementation to support the provision of health services at Ataturk Hospital continued to yield significant collective results and progress until December 2023. This collaboration played a crucial role in ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of strategic healthcare services in Afghanistan. The planned outputs and targets were largely achieved, effectively addressing basic human needs and complementing humanitarian activities. In line with the overarching objective, the initiative also facilitated improved access to information on reproductive healthcare services, COVID-19 prevention, and psychosocial support, while enhancing the technical capacities of medical personnel and improving WASH facilities and systems. Additionally, the JP demonstrated the benefits of STFA's 'Delivering as One' (DaO) approach, promoting synergetic collaboration and complementarity among the participating agencies.

During the reporting period, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities focused on the following key areas:

Field Assessments: WHO conducted monitoring visits to identify needs and areas for further service delivery improvement. Based on the findings, a comprehensive action plan was developed and implemented, leading to necessary enhancements in hospital operations. Additionally, in 2023 a Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA) was conducted by WHO, informing planning and management decisions.

Performance Monitoring: In 2023, WHO established a digital performance monitoring system within the project management team, providing supportive supervisory skills and on-the-job training to health providers. Regular visits to the hospital were conducted by monitoring and program teams, facilitating feedback sharing with the implementing agency and ensuring timely follow-up. The revitalization of a hospital council and various committees, including the Death Review Committee (DRC), enabled regular meetings and effective oversight. Patient complaint mechanisms (e.g. complaint boxes) and audits were maintained across all hospital wards, patient charters and codes of ethics were promoted, and the implementation of the Health Care Waste Management Plan (HCWMP) was closely supervised.

Data Collection and Analysis: The M&E plan embedded within the programme implementation utilized MoPH HMIS tools for data collection, recording, reporting, analysis, and review, with the aim of improving healthcare service delivery. Joint monitoring visits involving MoPH, WHO, and other stakeholders helped identify challenges and gaps, leading to the development of action plans and on-the-job training. Environmental health guides and external exposure were also provided to support hospital improvements.

Portfolio Review: In December 2023, the JP contracted a third-party firm, Afghan Australian Research and Management Consulting (ARM Consulting) to conduct a final portfolio review. The review, which started in 2024 examined the achievement of overarching intervention goals and results since the project's inception in May 2022. It assessed project design, resource utilization, stakeholder engagement, and results generated, providing insights into the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability within Afghanistan's complex healthcare landscape. The portfolio review concluded that the JP had made notable progress towards its intended goals and objectives, surpassing 12 out of the total 14 target indicators while largely achieving the remaining two.

These M&E activities played a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness and success of the STFA JP, providing valuable insights for continuous improvement and informed decision-making.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are foundational for the STFA 'Delivering as One' (DaO) modality of operations. This refers to a concept at the core of the UN reform process: coordinating different agencies to exploit their comparative advantages. It ultimately seeks to contribute to:

- A greater quality in programmatic interventions (i.e. tapping more effectively into the advantages of greater division of labour);
- A greater cost-effectiveness in the use of limited programmatic resources (reducing unnecessary overlaps or duplications); and
- An improved knowledge generation and dissemination.

Such benefits, in turn, contribute to:

- An improved coverage (outreach to end users/end-beneficiaries) and greater socio-economic impact (i.e. higher returns on programmatic investments);
- A greater sustainability; and
- An improved advocacy (i.e. helping to communicate more effectively, and with one voice, with other stakeholders).

The three PUNOs – WHO, UNFPA and UNDP – involved in the JP contributed relevant technical expertise, management and oversight capacities, and engaged with implementing partners to capacitate and ensure quality health service delivery. The roles of each PUNO were complementary based on the urgent needs of the Afghan people: WHO supported the main operations of the hospital (including procurement of health supplies and equipment, personnel management and training); UNFPA provided a pilot model for an integrated youth centre in the hospital; and UNDP supported the rehabilitation of the WASH systems.

The JP demonstrates the benefits of DaO whereby three agencies work together in a complementary and synergistic manner capitalizing on each agency's areas of expertise and comparative advantages. Such collaboration has brought greater value to end-users at a greater scale delivering higher programmatic returns on investments compared to uncoordinated stand-alone interventions.

Beyond DaO, regular engagements with contributing partners, hospital medical personnel and NGOs have also been instrumental in enabling well-informed design and delivery of JP interventions.





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ANNEXES

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ANNEX I. INDICATOR-BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

JP Output Indicators	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification				
Output 1: Essential services and community infrastructure – including for health, agriculture, education, and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.							
 1a. Number of people that have benefited from UN-supported essential services and/or new/rehabilitated infrastructure, disaggregated by type of service and sex. (Unit: People) Baseline: 0 Target: 150,060 Female target: 141,944 	Progress: 228,545 Female progress: 114,708						

ANNEX II: VOICES FROM THE FIELD: REAL-LIFE STORIES

FROM DESPAIR TO RECOVERY: THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CARE AT ATATURK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



Beneficiaries at Ataturk hospital in Kabul city

Afghanistan faces a significant shortage of high-quality and professional children's hospitals, which compromises the healthcare accessibility for children. This gap in healthcare infrastructure exacerbates the challenges in a country already struggling with economic constraints and political instability, leaving its future generations at risk. Through our Joint Sectoral Programme supporting Ataturk National Specialty Children Hospital, STFA provided major support improving its capacities including infrastructure.

We are pleased to share testimonials from Mohammad, who is a software engineer. "My son Ahmad was a very active 4-year-old at that time. Suddenly, he developed a fever and started losing weight. As his fever failed to settle, we took him to several doctors and many hospitals in Kabul, but no one could diagnose him correctly for three months. The unknown sickness kept weakening my son and we felt utterly helpless.

Finally, at the recommendation of our relatives, we took him to the Ataturk National Specialty Children Hospital in Kabul for further diagnosis and investigation. As a father, it is difficult to describe the feeling when you are holding your child, trying to memorize their smile, and not knowing the next time you will see it. My son, despite being so little, understood he was ill and was going to a hospital. He was little but brave. When we arrived at Ataturk hospital, a group of specialists jointly started the checkup process systematically including laboratory tests, imaging and other required examination inside the hospital. I was amazed upon observing the hospital transformation compared to four years ago. It was very clean, and the staff were wearing beautiful uniform while tending to my son with modern equipment for diagnosis and well equipped in different wards including digital x-ray and functionalized ICU.

They decided to seek treatment of my son as soon as possible and discussed options with doctors and our family. I was told that my son would get better through systematic follow up and treatment inside the hospital. The moment we walked through the doors of the Ataturk hospital, our hearts were filled with calm and a great sense of faith.

This was clearly not an ordinary place. It was only the National Tertiary and Specialty Children Hospital in the capital Kabul that were serving and saving poor patients free of charge and the impossible dream had been turned into a reality. I no longer needed to worry because the Hospital would ensure that my son got all the standard treatment he needed. My son's active treatment lasted for nearly three weeks and the clinical staff was always there for us, helping us to stay strong for our son. This was indeed a very difficult period for us, but we held on to our faith and prayed to God. Gradually, we started seeing the positive impact of treatment. We are very relieved when Ahmad was admitted in Ataturk National Tertiary and Specialty Children Hospital and accepted for treatment, free of cost and the hospital took care of him using the best available treatment just as a parent takes care of his child and were treated completely. Therefore, the maintenance of such standardized services highly recommended to be technically and financially supported by the international organizations and donors in the future."

"EXPERIENCE IS STILL THE BEST TEACHER" - YOUTH DIALOGUE FACILITATOR



Zuhal Latofe (2nd from left) facilitates a session on HIV and AIDS with mothers and medical doctors in the new IYC at Ataturk Hospital, Kabul Province, September 2022

Kabul, Afghanistan - "We need to learn from the experiences of people from different generations and different places to promote a better understanding of the issues and help young people navigate life better."

Zuhal Latofe is an intergenerational dialogue officer in the newly opened Integrated Youth Centre at the Ataturk Hospital, and she is excited about organising various sessions on issues that affect the Afghan youth today through dialogues that promote engagement of young people.

At the sidelines of a session on HIV and AIDS for 15 mothers, Ms Latofe explains that it is good to equip parents with basic knowledge of such medical conditions so that, in turn, they can start a discussion at home to make their children understand how they can stay healthy.

Two medical doctors from the Ataturk Hospital served as resource persons for the session. The series of intergenerational dialogues being organised by the IYC covered health topics relevant to young people, such as avoiding drug use, the dangers of early pregnancy and promoting healthy lifestyles. For Ms Latofe, experience is still the best teacher in promoting shared understanding on these issues. She also supports equipping parents and youth with knowledge on these issues so they can engage each other in meaningful conversations, whether at home or in the community.

"In our intergenerational dialogues, we engage people who can share their experiences on these issues so they can share ideas and enrich the conversation with young people. We talk about what are the good points from their experiences; what are the bad points; what is the overall experience, and what lessons have they learned?" explained Ms. Latofe.

By creating the space for conversations with young people, Ms Latofe hopes that the dialogues will spread in other spaces where the issues discussed are relevant, such as schools where teachers, parents and students can dialogue about the challenges faced by young people in education. Established with the support of UNFPA and the STFA, the IYC also organises sessions on adolescent and youth reproductive health and the promotion of healthy lifestyles; it also trains young people to become peer educators in their communities to expand knowledge sharing more widely. "I AM HAPPY THAT I FEEL BETTER, AND I AM READY TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND HAVE FUN WITH MY FRIENDS AGAIN."



Nargis, after having received the needed healthcare services in Ataturk Hospital is now in recovery room, Ataturk Hospital, Kabul Province, December 2022, WHO

Nargis is a ten-year-old schoolgirl living in the Saghar Kheil district of Ghor province. A few weeks back, Nargis suddenly started to suffer from fever, felt pain all over her body and became extremely weak to the extent that she frequently fell unconscious.

Her family was alarmed by this sudden negative change in her health and quickly took her to the nearest hospital in Ghor province. However, her condition could not be diagnosed due to the low capacity of local healthcare facilities. To be able to access the needed health services, Nargis's family travelled all the way from Ghor to Kabul province and visited a private hospital, where she was admitted for five days. However, due to their fragile financial situation, the family was unable to pay for the required treatment. Therefore, she was referred to the Atatürk Children's hospital, where she received all the necessary health services, including diagnosis, treatment, medical supplies, and food for free.

"Bringing my daughter to Kabul province presented many challenges—the distance, the cost of transportation, etc.—however, now that she is recuperating and receiving all the needed good quality service for free, I am impressed with the hospital's uninterrupted service and medical staff's demeanour," said Nargis's mother.

Nargis has been admitted to the Atatürk Hospital for more than 14 days. Her condition is gradually improving, and she is eager to resume her routine. "I am happy that I feel better, and I am ready to go back to school and have fun with my friends again," said Nargis.

ANNEX III: OTHER ASSESSMENTS OR EVALUATIONS

The beneficiary survey assessed the progress of STFA activities against specific JP performance indicators in the Northern and Southern regions and for the health sector project – Support to Ataturk Hospital in Kabul. In addition, this assessment examined the impact of announcements by the DfA on women's access to education and employment on STFA activities in the field.

- 96.4 percent of respondents, including patients and hospital staff, expressed satisfaction with the healthcare services provided.
- While the DfA imposed restrictions on women participation in communal or societal life have affected women participation, STFA funded joint programmes were able to not only deliver services to the restricted women and girls in the communities, but also involved them to the possible extent in development activities.

The final review of the joint project, 'Sustaining Essential Services in Atatürk Hospital' assessed the project's achievement of overarching goals and results, aligned with monitoring and evaluation processes within the STFA framework. As part of the review, the third-party firm assessed project design, resource utilisation, stakeholder engagement, and the extent of results generated, aiming to provide insights into the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability amidst Afghanistan's complex healthcare landscape. The review presents key findings in five areas: operational effectiveness, improvement in quality of health care, staff capacity enhancements, WASH facilities, and the performance of the Integrated Youth Centre.

1. Operational Capabilities and Effectiveness: The review assessed the role of the intervention in enhancing the hospital's operational capabilities and maximising its impact on patient care delivery. Seven findings were identified in this area. Firstly, the hospital staff effectively responded to healthcare challenges, serving a total of 264,596 children (57% male and 43% female), during the project duration. Secondly, the service portfolio expanded to include enhanced diagnostic capabilities and Outpatient Severe Acute Malnutrition (OPD SAM) services, although further investment is required in areas such as burn cases and oxygen production. Thirdly, patient access to healthcare services significantly increased, with a 195 percent rise in OPD visitors and a 31 percent increase in Inpatient Department (IPD). Fourthly, while the bed occupancy rate improved by 40 percent, the hospital faces challenges accommodating the rising caseload. Fifthly, the hospital's performance in major surgeries increased by 58 percent, yet it struggles to meet full compliance with Safe Care benchmarks. Additionally, medical, and surgical supplies maintained a fill rate of over 90 per cent throughout the intervention, ensuring consistent provision of essential materials. Lastly, inbound referral cases surged by 324 per cent, indicating the hospital's growing reputation and capacity as a leading referral centre.

2. Safe and Quality Healthcare: The review assessed the hospital's progress in meeting safe and quality healthcare standards, particularly focusing on initiatives essential to improve clinical outcomes, patient safety, and satisfaction. The hospital has upgraded its services to international standards, meeting 70 percent of SafeCare benchmarks, and has notably reduced the death rate by 19 percent. Additionally, there has been a significant increase of 328 percent in testing capacity, facilitating evidence based diagnosis, Moreover, patient satisfaction levels are high, with 89 percent expressing satisfaction with hospital services, underscoring the appreciation for the quality of medical care provided.

3. Strengthened Healthcare Personnel Capabilities: The project's tailored capacity-building program aimed at elevating the proficiency of hospital staff has yielded significant results. With over 90 percent participation from personnel, including a balanced representation of male (60%) and female staff (40%), the initiative has contributed to a notable 31 percent reduction in stillbirth rates. Furthermore, approximately 80 percent of medical professionals acknowledge the efficacy of the training in bolstering their ability to tackle healthcare challenges effectively, underscoring the program's success in meeting their expectations and enhancing overall capacity.

4. Adolescents and Youth Mobilization and Empowerment: The establishment of the IYC within Atatürk Hospital, led by UNFPA, signifies a pivotal step in nurturing Afghanistan's youthful population towards healthier and more prosperous futures. With over 26,0311 engaged and mobilized adolescents and youth, comprising 51 percent male and 49 percent female, the IYC has played a vital role in empowering this demographic through active involvement in healthcare decision-making, awareness programs, and preventive health initiatives, thereby fostering a healthier lifestyle. Notably, 45 percent of adolescents and youth reported significant improvements in well-being, mental health, and reproductive health as a direct result of IYC's initiatives. Furthermore, the centre's impact extends beyond its walls, with 86 percent of trained adolescents and youth serving as volunteer educators in their communities, actively promoting awareness about youth-friendly health services. Overall, 96 percent of consulted adolescents and youth beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the IYC, affirming its effectiveness in addressing their needs and aspirations.

5.Renovation, Equipment and WASH Facilities: The completion of renovation and equipment enhancement initiatives within the project has significantly improved healthcare service delivery at the hospital. State-of-the-art medical equipment has been procured and installed, expanding treatment capabilities across various departments. Additionally, upgrades to non-medical equipment have contributed to enhanced operational efficiency, streamlining hospital workflows. Extensive renovation work undertaken across key units has aimed to elevate facility standards. Notably, water facilities have been upgraded, ensuring the hospital's access to a daily supply of 12,000 litres of clean drinking water.

ANNEX IV: PROGRAMMATIC REVISIONS

Following the approval of the Joint Project 'Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk and Baghlan Hospitals' by the Steering Committee in April 2022, in Brussels, certain developments necessitated the revision of the project document. In October 2022, the STFA Steering Committee approved an amendment to the project. The following amendments to the Project Document were approved by the STFA SC on 20 October 2022 through a 'silence procedure':

- Removal of 'Baghlan Hospital' as a target facility in the Joint Project Document (including Project Document title).
- Revision of the project workplan and budget, ensuring that the total budget of the project is not exceeded.

These amendments allowed for the reallocation of resources initially allocated to Baghlan Hospital to the Ataturk Hospital. As a result, the reallocated resources have facilitated the extension of activities in support of Ataturk Hospital for an additional five months (i.e., January 2023 to May 2023), without any changes to the total budget or PUNO allocations. It is important to note that the overall goal and objectives of the project remain unchanged.

The Joint Programme Document for Sustaining Essential Services in Ataturk Hospital was again amended and approved by STFA Steering Committee on 25 May 2023. The amendments include:

- Revision of end date of project to 31 December 2023
- Revision of results framework and workplan
- Revision of budget to include a new allocation to the World Health Organization (WHO)





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