



**Save the Children**  
Australia

# Children of Uruzgan

## AFGHANISTAN





# About Children of Uruzgan

In Uruzgan one-third of the population do not have access to any health services. Less than half of children under the age of two have received basic immunisations. Every year around 300 mothers and more than 3,000 children under the age of five die. Nine out of 10 women give birth at home without any skilled support.

There are also challenges for children's education. For three decades, children have had few opportunities to access formal education. It is estimated that 81% of children aged 7-13 in Uruzgan do not attend school, and of those students that do attend, less than 10% are girls.

## Save the Children Australia's Children of Uruzgan program will improve the lives of 300,000 people.

The Children of Uruzgan (CoU) program is a flagship partnership between the Australian Government (AusAID) and Save the Children Australia. It is one of the most ambitious aid projects ever undertaken by an Australian NGO.

CoU is a four-year program aimed at enhancing access to, quality of and use of basic health and education services for children and their families in the six districts of Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. The program supports an estimated population of 300,000 beneficiaries, with a particular focus on women and girls, ethnic minorities and those in remote and underserved communities.

Save the Children Australia is working with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Public Health, local NGO partners and communities to deliver this ambitious program.



"I teach other girls about health and hygiene, they don't know these things if we don't tell them. For example, wash your hands before you eat dinner," said a young girl in Uruzgan, Afghanistan. Photo: Mats Lignell/Save the Children

## Health

The CoU program will improve women's and children's health by increasing access to and quality of essential maternal and child health and nutrition services. CoU will train community health workers, which will increase the capacity of communities to address and prevent malnutrition and child illnesses, such as pneumonia and diarrhoea, which claim the lives of so many children under five. CoU will also train midwives to ensure women have access to skilled birth attendants during childbirth.

- **Training nearly 300 community health workers and 50 midwives**
- **Vaccinating 6,000 children and treating children suffering from malnutrition, pneumonia and diarrhoea**



## Education

The CoU program will improve access to and quality of basic education for children, particularly girls, by building community schools, increasing non-formal education opportunities and improving school management and teaching skills. CoU will also train female teachers, which is essential to encouraging girls to attend school. Literacy and early childhood development groups will also be established. Research shows that educating women has far-reaching benefits. Educated women are more likely to participate in the formal labour market, earn more income, and provide better health care and education to their children. All of this benefits entire communities and generations.

- **Establishing 100 early childhood development groups**
- **Constructing community schools and training to 1,000 teachers**
- **Establishing 125 women's literacy groups**





A six-year-old girl waits in line to see the mobile health team. She has an earache.

Photo: Mats Lignell/Save the Children

## Empowering communities

A key part of our program is to develop and build the capacity of local communities. CoU will train 30 community leaders and nearly 2,000 members of health councils and parents' associations to become advocates on the importance of health and education in their communities. CoU will also work with 300 communities to develop their own community projects.

- **Build the capacity of local communities**



Basnura, 23, is looking forward to training more midwives in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan.

Photo: Mats Lignell/Save the Children

## About Uruzgan, Afghanistan

**Afghanistan is one of the toughest places in the world to be a child and a mother.**

Uruzgan province is one of the poorest and most insecure places in Afghanistan.

In Uruzgan:

- 9 children lose their lives every day
- every year more than 3,000 children die under the age of five
- less than half of children under the age of two have received basic immunisations
- 9 out of 10 women give birth at home without any skilled support
- every year around 300 mothers die in childbirth
- one-third of the population do not have access to any health services
- 8 out of 10 children do not go to school
- of those students that do attend school, less than 10% are girls
- 0.3% of women can read and write
- for three decades, schools were closed and students had no access to education.

Sources: AusAID Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Uruzgan province 2010; National Household Survey; National Health Management Information System data for Uruzgan province 2010; Where Giving Birth is a Forecast of Death, Lancet.







Children at our Early Childhood Development group in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. Photo: Mats Lignell/Save the Children

## Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children

**Save the Children has been established for more than 90 years and works in 119 countries around the world.**

Save the Children has extensive global experience in delivering education in conflict-affected and fragile states. For example, the Rewrite the Future campaign improved the quality of education for 8 million children affected by conflict.

Save the Children has been working in Afghanistan since 1976 and in Uruzgan province for over 15 years. Save the Children has successfully operated in these fragile and high-risk areas by continually learning from its programs, mobilising communities, and building successful relationships with government ministries, international and local NGOs, and community leaders.



Photo: Mats Lignell/Save the Children

*"I learned in Health and Hygiene class that I need to keep warm and when I cough I have to cough into a handkerchief in my hand,"*  
said an 8 year old girl.

### Save the Children Australia

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