



New hospital marks first step in Afghan reconstruction

In a country ravaged by decades of war and unrest, the opening of a new hospital in Kabul marked a new sense of hope for the beleaguered people of Afghanistan. Help came from a number of governments and charities, including the UK Government.

The Karte Seh Hospital, in Kabul, had few medicines, no working equipment and no running water or electricity when the charity, *Hope worldwide*, started to support them in June 2001 - during the Taliban government. The makeshift hospital was located in a converted private building.



The hospital in Kabul, before work began

Due to economic factors, the hospital also lost its lease and was ordered to move out. The landlord simply wanted his property back since his family were moving back to Afghanistan. A new location was found nearby in a ruined building.

In January the Department for International Development (DFID) offered a \$61,000 grant to rehabilitate the building, previously used as a greenhouse and Ministry of Health offices. These were destroyed during the civil war in the early 1990's.



Work proceeds on hospital in early April 2002

In February 2002 visitors to the site, including a construction consultant, commented that rehabilitation would be nearly impossible due to the extent of damage to the building. Despite this, work started and within 4 months the hospital was opened.

The hospital still had little in the way of furniture and equipment. USAID and the Japanese govt then stepped in to provide the hospital with new beds and some equipment with a \$40,000 grant. The Japanese government also funded some training. This allowed the 14 doctors to be trained in Basic and Advanced life support, through a visiting doctor from the UK (Dr Sacha Simon). Also 2 female Doctors were trained in the use of Ultrasound to assist in assessing and diagnosing problems in pregnant women.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in Kabul to assist the new Afghan Interim Authority with the provision of security and stability, provided the hospital with 2 very needed generators through DFID funding, since the area still has no electricity supply.



ISAF help patients move

In addition, ISAF provided the necessary electrical cable and technical advice for installation.

When the patients were moved to the new hospital, ISAF's ambulances carried the sick to their much-improved new hospital.

Other charities also helped by donating nearly \$3 Million dollars worth of medicines. These were flown from the US to the UK for free by Fed-Ex Express, where the 13 Close Support Medical regiment (one of the British regiments making up ISAF) flew them to Kabul. These medicines have been a great help in treating many sick and poor Afghans.

A number of local and foreign representatives attended the Hospital Opening Ceremony - including The Japanese Ambassador, Mr Komano, The US Vice Ambassador, David Sedney plus the The president of the Curative Department of the Ministry of Health in Afghanistan, Dr Marooch.



Opening ceremony at new hospital

A guided tour of the facility followed the ribbon cutting with refreshments served afterwards. US Vice Ambassador David Sedney said the hospital was an inspiration and that:

"It has been the privilege of the United States government through USAID and the joint civil military taskforce to have helped in this programme".

President Hamid Karzai sent a message saying:

"On behalf of the Interim Authority of Afghanistan, I appreciate the hard work of Dr Mark Timlin from HOPE worldwide and his team."

The representative from DFID said that the hospital **"was an achievement that will save many lives."** This was in fact the first hospital to be rebuilt during the tenure of the new Interim administration.

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