

UK charity to save thousands of children's lives in Afghanistan

Kids Operating Room provides safe paediatric surgery in one of the most difficult countries in the world

A UK charity has confirmed it will create a state-of-the-art paediatric operating room in Afghanistan's capital – embarking on its most challenging installation to date.

Kids Operating Room will provide children in Afghanistan with access to safe surgery for the first time in years.

Installed at Atatürk Children's Hospital in Kabul, the country's busiest hospital, surgeons have been working with a critical lack of equipment or resources to treat children.

Afghanistan has an exceptionally large child population with a dangerous lack of access to safe surgery – it is reported to have one of the highest mortality rates in the world according to [Unicef data](#)¹.

The installation has involved the collation and shipment of more than 3,300 items of the highest grade paediatric surgical equipment from the charity's logistics hub in Dundee.

Now at sea, the shipment is on track to arrive in the country this month, from which point the charity will work closely with in-country biomedical engineers with a view to the Operating Room being ready from early next year.

Nicola Wood, who co-founded Kids Operating Room with husband, Garreth and whose charity has installed 59 operating rooms across Africa and Latin America, said: "The tireless effort from our team to make this possible has been breath-taking. Afghanistan is one of the hardest places in the world to be a child and there is a huge and desperate need for a paediatric surgery facility. This installation will directly save lives, as well as allow children to live their lives free from disability and pain.

"Ultimately, it will transform the futures of vulnerable children and their families. Every child deserves access to surgery and we're committed to putting the resources in place to make this happen for children across the globe.

"Garreth and I feel very proud that Kids Operating Room are now in Afghanistan and feel strongly that it is a country that will particularly benefit from these facilities."

It is expected the Operating Room will treat around 1,000 children every year and the charity will work with the hospital to ensure they have the essential equipment to set up and carry out complex and lifesaving procedures.

The inspiration for the project follows a partnership formed with global surgery expert Dr. Dunya Moghul, who is now a KidsOR paediatric surgeon.

Dr. Moghul, originally from Afghanistan, made clear the need to improve surgical conditions for children in the country. Having built a relationship with KidsOR, discussions soon opened around installing an operating room in Kabul – despite the challenging circumstances.

She said: "There is a huge and desperate need for paediatric surgery in Kabul and I'm proud to work with KidsOR to get children access to the safe surgery they so badly need.

"Surgery is a basic human right that must sit at the heart of

any sustainable healthcare system. By providing access to safe paediatric surgery, we are breaking new ground to save children's lives."

"Currently, paediatric surgeons are working with very old equipment that is often faulty or equipment that is designed for adults. This means providing surgical services for children in these settings is exceedingly difficult and a lot of time is lost.

"The installation will not only provide a safe, clean facility for surgery but it will also provide brand new dedicated children's equipment."

KidsOR will work with local engineers to install the operating room and will complete training sessions to upskill local people – who going forward will maintain and sustain the operating room.

Nicola Wood continues:

"At Kids Operating Room, we believe that there needs to be a global commitment to strengthening health systems to ensure that no child gets left behind because of a lack of access to vital surgery".



Nicola Wood co-founder of Kids Operating Room