

Dear Friends of NOOR

What **incredible changes** in coming back to Kabul after 25 years. From the city of ½ million people when we arrived in 1979 to the crowded bazaars, murky air and busy building sites of a city of several million people. We see crowds of eager young students, **girls and boys**, and are impressed by their politeness and **passion to build their country**.



The **NOOR** project has vastly multiplied and diversified, geographically and in the type of staff being trained. Modern Small Incision Cataract Surgery (SICS) with intraocular lenses to restore focus is transforming lives. Trachoma, and the pain and visual impairment it causes, is on the wane.

In a changed landscape where there is even a private eye hospital offering sophisticated laser refractive surgery it is important that NOOR on the one hand maintains its **commitment to care for the poor**, but on the other hand is demonstrably offering modern **high quality training and eye care**. Visiting specialists are still vital, and there are vital equipment needs!

*Dr. Russell Lienert, visiting ophthalmologist to the Tom Little Memorial Eye Hospital and Mazar Ophthalmic Centre*

### The 'Tom Little Memorial Eye Hospital'

- ⊕ trains **three residents** and provides internships for 17 ophthalmic technicians in their two-year course,
- ⊖ but is in urgent need of a **teaching operating microscope** for \$ 25,000;
- ⊕ sees more than double the number of patients compared to last year.
- ⊕ From mid 2012 onward, NOOR has been given the unique opportunity to concentrate its teaching facilities, the hospital as well as the central office under one roof in a new **hospital building on Darulaman Road**,
- ⊖ but is facing substantial one-time **setting-up costs** before benefiting from the many advantages of this move.



I want to serve my people. By training ophthalmic technicians I can make a lasting impact!

Sahba, optometrist and administrator of NOOR's Ophthalmic Technician Training Program, was educated in Iran as a refugee and has returned to Afghanistan with enthusiasm and energy.



### An Eye Clinic for Bamiyan Province?

We are hopeful that an agreement with the government can be made to set up an Eye Clinic in the remote Bamiyan Province. **Travel from Bamiyan to the nearest eye clinic costs as much as a cataract operation and takes 2 days.** Do you want to be part of this new clinic by contributing towards the setting up costs?

### No more need for a trip to India

At NOOR's so called "Annex" in Kabul, Rahim was checking a keratoconus patient with extremely poor vision. The patient had been told that he could only be helped in India, which would cost him 2 weeks of his time and over \$ 600. What a relief to find out that he had finally landed in **the only place in the whole of Afghanistan that provides hard contact lenses**. NOOR did it for \$ 30 with full cost recovery.

### Mazar Ophthalmic Centre (MOC)

NOOR's 40-bed eye hospital in the northern city of Mazar has seen remarkable growth. In an improved soon-to-be opened theatre our doctors will continue to perform about **15 operations daily**. MOC has made great progress toward self-sustainability. A significant number of extremely **poor patients**, however, **are treated at reduced rates**, as no person is ever turned away because of their inability to pay. For MOC we are therefore in need of \$ 30,000 for 2012.



### The blind and visually impaired in Afghanistan should not suffer because

- the security situation does not allow us to hold eye camps in their region,
- wearing glasses may be a social stigma,
- they can't afford treatment.

*Helping to pay for treatment can be done quickly; bringing change in other matters might require much patience and prayer...*