

A Survey of the Afghan People

Afghanistan in 2011: A Survey of the Afghan People
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
November 15, 2011

1. What is the 2011 Survey of the Afghan People?

Designed and managed by The Asia Foundation's office in Afghanistan, the survey is the broadest and most comprehensive public opinion poll of 6,300 Afghan citizens across the 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

2. What does the survey cover?

The survey is designed to gather first-hand opinions from a broad and nationally representative sample of Afghan citizens on a variety of contemporary governance and development-related issues. It is intended to provide policy makers in government, the international community, and the broader Afghan public with reliable data as they make decisions and craft future policy.

3. How often is the survey conducted?

This is the seventh annual survey of Afghan citizens conducted by The Asia Foundation's office in Afghanistan; previous polls were released in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. The surveyed is designed to capture perceptions of Afghan citizens in a specific period and provides a valid and reliable tool to measure shifts in public opinion over time.

4. What topics are covered in the survey report?

Key topics explored include national mood, security, reconciliation and reintegration, economy, development and service delivery, governance, corruption, political participation, justice systems, women in society, and access to information.

5. When was the survey fieldwork conducted?

In-person interviews were conducted between July 2 and August 1, 2011 in Afghanistan.

6. How many Afghan citizens were surveyed?

A random, nationally representative sample of 6,348 Afghan citizens were polled across all 34 provinces. Respondents were 18 years and older, residents of Afghanistan, and divided between men (57%) and women (43%). The survey respondents included both urban (22%) and rural (78%) households.

(A full breakdown of respondents' demographic and socio-economic details is provided in Appendix 1 of the report.)

7. How many questions are in the survey questionnaire?

The survey questionnaire included 88 questions.

8. How was the survey questionnaire developed?

As in our other surveys, the Foundation has developed a rigorous process that complies with standard research and technical protocols. The methodology has been tried-and-tested in the other countries we work in and adapted for use in Afghanistan.

The survey uses a standard questionnaire for comparability over time, which combines questions on Afghanistan that are relevant to policy makers, social researchers, and donor organizations. The survey continues to track core areas of interests while also adapting the questionnaire to address current conditions, constraints, and challenges. (A full explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2 of the report.)

9. Who conducted the fieldwork?

A total of 589 interviewers (259 women and 330 men) were rigorously trained to conduct in-person interviews throughout Afghanistan. Fieldwork was conducted by the Kabul-based Afghan Center for Socio-economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), which has received support from the Foundation since 2006.

The Afghan men and women trained to conduct the in-person interviews come from the local areas and provide a neutral, direct measure of Afghan citizen's attitudes and experiences. Many of the interviewers were part of the Afghan field teams from previous years' surveys. (A full explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2 of the report.)

10. What is the approximate length of time for each in-person interview?

Each interview lasted approximately 45-90 minutes.

11. What is the survey's margin of error?

The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 4.1%.

12. How did security issues in the country affect the results of the survey?

In 2011, a number of districts in the country were not surveyed because of inaccessibility due to logistical problems, natural disasters, and security. In two provinces, Paktika and Zabul, the security situation restricted the freedom of movement of survey researchers, making it unsafe to employ female interviewers to conduct interviews with female respondents. This meant that no women were included in the sample in these provinces.

In those provinces where security was a challenge, to obtain a representative sample, alternative sampling points were selected in the same provinces to adjust for insecurity and logistical difficulties. This year, 11% of sampling points were changed for security reasons compared to 16% in 2010. (A full explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2 of the report.)

13. Who funded the survey?

The survey is a product of The Asia Foundation, with funding support provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The survey remains an independent and impartial product held to the highest and most rigorous standards of research.

14. What is The Asia Foundation?

The Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. With 18 offices throughout Asia, an office in Washington, DC, and its headquarters in San Francisco, the Foundation addresses development issues on both a country and regional level.

15. What does The Asia Foundation do in Afghanistan?

Since our Kabul office re-opened in 2002, the Foundation has assisted Afghan efforts to rebuild the country and accelerate development. Our programs focus on governance, law, and civil society, including support for the development of a new constitution and national voter registration, civic education, and government-media relations. The Foundation provides long-term support and technical assistance to key governmental institutions responsible for the executive branch, parliamentary affairs, agriculture, and sub-national government. Other programs focus on women's empowerment and education.

16. Why does The Asia Foundation conduct this survey?

The Foundation has established a reputation for developing empirical surveys for use across Asia in order to pinpoint citizen concerns and needs, to gauge public support for development initiatives, and to inform important policy debate and Foundation program design and refinement. Foundation surveys have been conducted in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and several other countries.

17. What does The Asia Foundation think of the survey?

The Foundation's goal is provide robust, useful, and accurate data that can illuminate the situation on the ground and provide context for relevant policy work. The survey is a critical tool that provides a barometer of public opinion to inform national leaders, scholars, donors, and the policymaking community.

18. Will The Asia Foundation publish a companion analytical assessment this year?

In order to provide interpretation and contextual analysis of the 2011 survey findings, we are currently working on a companion volume for release in early 2012. Contributing authors will include academics and policymakers from the international and Afghan communities.

19. Where can I read or download the survey report?

The complete report is available on the Foundation website at <http://www.asiafoundation.org>. A summary of key findings and frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available in English, Dari, and Pashto.

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20. Are more Afghan surveys planned?

A survey is planned for 2012.

21. Are the complete survey data sets available?

Please contact the Foundation's Afghanistan office at surveyrelease@ag.asiafound.org.

22. Who should I contact for more information?

For non-media queries, please contact the Foundation's Afghanistan office. For media queries, please contact Amy Ovalle at aovalle@asiafound.org or Eelynn Sim at esim@asiafound.org.

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