GUIDING QUESTIONS

- There is a large difference between the amount of goods and resources that Afghanistan imports and that it exports. What impact does this have on the country’s stability?
- Less than one third of Afghan females are literate – can read and write at a basic level. Knowing that educating females can change a country in as little as one generation, how might Afghanistan change with an educated population?

GENERAL INFORMATION

Capital City: Kabul

Population of Afghanistan: 33,332,025 (2016 est.)
Population of Kabul: 4.635 million
Mobile/Cellular Telephones: 19.709 million

Afghanistan is one of the world’s least developed countries. It consists of roughly 20 ethnic groups that each have their own language and culture, creating difficulty becoming a unified nation. The country has a long history of conflict and foreign intervention. After a 10 year war with Russia, an extremist Islamic group called the Taliban came to power in 1990. Afghan society, especially the women, suffered greatly under the Taliban’s extremely conservative views and laws. While women are regaining some basic rights (for example, the Afghan Constitution reserves several seats for women in the National Assembly) their freedoms are severely limited, especially in rural areas. Due to years of conflict and war, the country has limited infrastructure, including an insufficient school system.

Afghanistan is a land locked country bordered by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, Pakistan and Iran.
GOVERNMENT

Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic. The country’s current central government is made up of a president, first vice president and second vice president, all elected by the people. The country’s National Assembly consists of the House of Elders, elected by the president and provincial councils, and the House of People, directly elected by the people. Afghanistan’s current constitution was ratified in 2004. The country’s legal system uses a mix of civil, customary and Islamic law as its foundation.

THE PEOPLE

Education

Percent of the population considered literate: Citizens able to read and write over the age of 15.

- Females: 24.2%
- Males: 52%

Ethnic Group Distribution

- Pashtun: 42%
- Tajik: 27%
- Hazara: 9%
- Uzbek: 9%
- Aimak: 4%
- Turkmen: 3%
- Baloch: 2%
- Other: 4%

Religious Group Distribution (2009 est.)

- Sunni Muslim: 84.7% - 89.7%
- Shia Muslim: 10-15%
- Other: 0.3%

Languages

- Afgha Persian, or Dari (official): 50%
- Pashto (official): 35%
- Turkic languages: 11% (primarily Uzbek & Turkmen)
- Minor languages: 4% (primarily Balochi & Pashai)

**Much bilingualism, with Dari as the lingua franca**

Rural vs. Urban

Percent of the country’s population that lives in urban areas: 27%

THE ECONOMY

Afghanistan’s economy is beginning to improve after decades of conflict, but the nation still faces numerous challenges. The country is highly dependent on foreign aid and continues to struggle with deficiencies in housing, clean water, electricity, medical care, education, physical infrastructure and the inability to institute rules of law consistently throughout the country.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in US$: 19.33 billion

Currency Exchange Rate: 1 US$: 6114 Afghanis (2016 est.)

Imports and Exports

- Afghanistan imported $7.004 billion in machinery and other capital goods, food, textiles and petroleum products. (2014 est.)
- Afghanistan exported $658 million in opium, fruits and nuts, handwoven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, precious and semiprecious gems. (2014 est.)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones

RESOURCES

- Khan Academy at [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

All data was reported in 2015 unless otherwise noted.