

# Afghanistan



Located in central Asia, landlocked Afghanistan borders six other countries.



## IN BRIEF

The Taliban, which ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, was notorious for its oppression of women. Women could not work,

appear in public without a full-length burqa, receive an education, or go out without a male escort. Women who broke these rules were beaten, even killed.

After the U.S. invasion, the Taliban fell, and women regained some freedom. But in recent years, a resurgence in Taliban forces, record-high drug production, and re-armed warlords have led to a threat to the well-being and rights of hundreds of thousands of innocent citizens. For many Afghani women, it feels that the freedom they tasted in 2001 is being taken away from them yet again.

Afghan women are excited to join the programs offered by Women for Women International. They understand that education and job skills training will help them rebuild their lives, protect their rights, and restore their voices. To learn more, watch our field report at

[www.womenforwomen.org](http://www.womenforwomen.org)

**Language:** Dari (Afghan Persian)

**Life expectancy (female):** 44.39 years

**Life expectancy (male):** 44.04 years

**Population:** 32,738,376

**Per capita income:** \$1,000

**Unemployment:** 40%

**Literacy (female):** 12.6%

- 11% of our program participants can read more than their name

- 9% of our program participants can write more than their name

**Literacy (male):** 43.1%

**Access to safe drinking water:** 13%

## A message from Sweeta Noori Country Director, Afghanistan

Women for Women International-Afghanistan opened its doors in October 2002 to meet the basic needs of socially excluded women survivors of war in and around the capital. We now provide rights awareness, leadership education, literacy, and vocational skills training to thousands of Afghani women, paving the way for the participants' sustainable future in this difficult post-war period.

It's a complicated society here in Afghanistan, where women are not given much opportunity to participate in these types of activities. But over time we have managed to gain the confidence of our program participants – and their families – so the women can access our much-needed services.

As Country Director, on behalf of my colleagues, and upon constant request of the program participants to give their thanks, we appreciate your support for these women.

*Sweeta Noori*

Learn more about our program in Afghanistan at [www.womenforwomen.org/afghanistan](http://www.womenforwomen.org/afghanistan)

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## A Day In the Life

A typical woman in Afghanistan wakes early to pray, and to send her children to prayers at the local mosque. She begins doing her chores and housework, prepares breakfast for her family, and helps them get ready for school or work. Some Afghan women are not allowed to work outside the home, so they work at chores and handicrafts inside all day.

After she prepares dinner – typically yogurt, rice, and inexpensive meat – and prayers are finished, she'll tell her family what she's learned at Women for Women International classes, or they'll hear traditional folk tales. If the electricity is on, they'll watch television.

## One Woman's Story: Azada

Azada was 14 and living as a Afghani refugee in Pakistan when her father asked her to marry a cousin of hers; hoping, as is custom in some forms of Islam, that a relative would treat her better than a stranger. It wasn't the case this time.

Azada had two daughters with her husband, and wondered how she'd ever be able to escape his abuse. Finally her father agreed she should divorce, and she lived with him in Pakistan, performing difficult and low-paying labor to survive, until the Taliban fell in 2001.

Upon her return to Kabul with her family, Azada enrolled in Women for Women International's gender awareness classes, and learned to cut semi-precious stones for jewelry. Now she teaches other women the skills she acquired with Women for Women International – and her most prized possession is her certificate of employment. "I never thought that I would have the opportunity to support myself without a man," Azada says. "Now... I am doing it!"



Photo Credit: Jenny Matthews



Photo Credit: Jenny Matthews

## HOW DO I SAY?

Hello	Salam
How are you?	Sihateh shuma chetor ast?
How is your family?	Sihateh fameel suma chetor ast?
Please tell me about yourself	Lutfan dar bareh khod soobaat nemayed
My name is ...	Ismeh man ...
I am happy to write you	Man khushaalam ke barayat menooweesam
I am thinking of you	Man dar bareh shuma fikir mekunam
Congratulations	Tabreek bashad
Thank You	Tashakur
Goodbye	Khuda Hafiz

