



USAID | AFGHANISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID partners with the Afghan Government and other donors to strengthen Afghanistan's education system.

- In 2013, one million Afghan children have enrolled in school because of USAID assistance.
- Since 2008, Afghanistan's nation-wide literacy rate has increased by 5%; since 2005, the youth literacy rate has increased by more than 16%.
- According to The Asia Foundation's 2012 Survey of the Afghan people, 89% of Afghans rate their government's performance in education as very or somewhat good.

Photo credit: USAID/Afghanistan

Education

Three decades of conflict devastated Afghanistan's education systems and institutions. In 2002, an estimated 900,000 boys attended school, while women and girls were almost completely excluded from educational opportunities. Since then, the Afghan government, USAID, and international donors have worked closely to rebuild Afghanistan's education sector. The Ministry of Education, with support from USAID and other donors, has built more than 13,000 schools, recruited and trained more than 186,000 teachers, and increased net enrollment rates for school-aged children past 56 percent. Today, more than 8 million students are enrolled in school, including more than 2.5 million girls. In 2013, one million Afghan learners are enrolled in schools with USAID assistance, and over 5 million primary grade students benefitted from USAID assistance.

The 2013 Survey of the Afghan People by The Asia Foundation found that 72 percent of Afghans are satisfied with the availability of education for children. A strong education system that includes professional teachers and high-quality learning materials and methodologies is essential to Afghan economic growth, democratic development, and stability. Afghanistan has one of the youngest populations in the world, making quality education for rapidly growing numbers of school-aged boys and girls a top national priority.

OUR WORK

USAID education strategy focuses on addressing urgent needs and strengthening Afghan processes and institutions to build a national educational system that can sustain itself in the long term. As more Afghans attend school and seek skilled employment, there is a growing need and demand for textbooks, learning spaces, trained teachers, and innovative approaches to improve quality and to expand access to education at all levels.

IMPROVING BASIC EDUCATION

USAID supports improving the quality of basic education by helping train more than 74,000 Ministry of Education (MoE) teachers, including more than 22,000 women, and by distributing more than 114 million textbooks to schools. Women and girls attend school more often when they do not have to travel long, sometimes dangerous distances, making easy access to schools an important priority. Between 2006 and 2011, USAID assistance to community-based education enabled approximately 105,000 students (more than 65% female) in remote villages to attend school. Research efforts are underway to determine the best way to successfully transition community-based education to the formal system of MoE schools.

USAID also works directly with the MoE to build a sustainable national educational system. USAID advisors are helping the MoE strengthen financial and human-resources management, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation systems. USAID and other donors have assisted the Ministry's development and implementation of national plans for strengthening Afghanistan's education sector. The National Education Strategic Plan III (2014-2020) establishes policies and objectives for the next five years, and focuses on increasing equitable access to education and improving education quality through five main program areas: General and Islamic Education; Curriculum Development, Teacher Education, and Science and Technology Education; Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Literacy; and Education Management.

SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION

Public university enrollment has increased from 7,800 in 2001 to 123,000 in 2013, and demand for higher education continues to grow. In 2014, USAID is helping Afghanistan's higher education professionals effectively manage the growth of tertiary education while also improving academic quality. The University Support and Workforce Development Program helps improve the management capacity of the Ministry of Higher Education and ten public universities to manage this growth, improve academics, and create new opportunities for Afghan students pursuing higher education. USAID helped develop Afghanistan's first Information Technology associates degree, which is at Kabul Polytechnic University, to link students with growing industries; every semester, female students make up half of the student population. Similarly, with USAID's assistance, the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) enrolls 30% female students – one of the highest percentages of female enrollment in Afghanistan. Since 2011, AUAF has offered Afghanistan's first western-style Master of Business Administration degree.

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An accelerated learning program in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.
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An Afghan girl studies in class.
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