



The Asia Foundation

Afghanistan in 2010: A Survey of the Afghan People Frequently Asked Questions November 9, 2010

Q1. Who funded the poll?

The poll is a product of The Asia Foundation, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Q2. Who did The Asia Foundation partner with to carry out the survey?

Fieldwork was conducted by the Kabul-based Afghan Center for Socio-economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), which has received support from The Asia Foundation since 2006. A total of 634 Afghan men and women were trained to conduct in-person interviews throughout Afghanistan – in all 34 provinces. Many of the interviewers were part of the Afghan field teams from previous years' surveys.

Q3. How were the questions developed?

The 2010 and previous surveys use a standard questionnaire for comparability over time, which combines questions on Afghanistan that are relevant to policy makers, social researchers, and donor organizations with questions that are tried and tested and have been used in other countries across the world in well-known surveys like the *East and South Asia Barometers* and the *Latin Pop Surveys*, as well as other Asia Foundation surveys in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Nepal.

As in previous years, this poll was designed, directed, and edited by The Asia Foundation, using a process of consultation to arrive at the best possible questionnaire, given the need for valid and reliable data that could be compared over time, a tenet essential to useful survey techniques. Over time, the survey tracks core areas of interests while also adapting the questionnaire to the current landscape and strengthening methodology to address current constraints and challenges. For example, this year there are additional questions on parliamentary elections, development, corruption, and on reconciliation and reintegration. Other questions were condensed slightly to allow time for these additional crucial, timely questions. The survey takes approximately 1 ½ hours per person polled, so we try to keep it to no longer than that for practical reasons.

Q4. What methodology was used?

The methodology used was a multi-stage random sample of 6,467 in-person interviews with Afghan citizens 18 years of age and older, both women and men, all residing in Afghanistan.

The sampling universe was divided into eight geographical regions consisting of 34 provinces. All of the provinces were covered in the survey. Due to the local cultural traditions, the universe at the outset was divided into male and female sub-samples. Each region, province, and further strata was allocated an equal number of male and female sampling points. The interviews among the male and female respondents were conducted by Afghan enumerators of the same sex, for example, only women enumerators interviewed women respondents.

(A full explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2 of this report.)

Q5. How many Afghans were surveyed?

6,467 (56% men and 44% women)

Q6. How did security issues in the country affect the results of the survey?

During 2010, the security situation in some provinces, such as the presence of active fighting, as well as natural impediments, such as flooding in some provinces caused a number of sampling points to be tactically adjusted or replaced to keep interviewers out of harm's way. Alternate sampling points were selected and allocated in the same provinces to adjust for insecurity and logistical difficulties in order to cover all 34 provinces and obtain a representative sample of views. In 2010, 16% of sampling points had to be changed across the country for security reasons compared to 12% in 2009.

The 634 Afghan men and women trained to conduct in-person interviews come from the local areas and provide a neutral, direct measure of Afghan citizen's attitudes and experiences.

More details are found in section 1.3 of the Executive Summary of this report. Full details on the methodology of the survey are available in Appendix 2.

Q7. How is this different from The Asia Foundation's previous polls?

Expanding from its limited scope in 2004, and building upon previous surveys conducted in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009, the 2010 survey continued tracking core areas of interests, while also adapting the questionnaire to the current landscape and strengthening methodology to address current constraints and challenges. This is reflected in the current survey through a greater emphasis placed on parliamentary elections, development, corruption, and on reconciliation and reintegration. Other questions are condensed slightly to allow time for these additional questions and still keep the questionnaire to a reasonable length..

The 2004 survey (released on July, 13, 2004) was geared towards assessing voter awareness of the 2004 Afghan Presidential elections, had a smaller sample size (804 respondents), and the number of questions were aimed at those who intended to vote in the 2005 Afghan elections.

The 2006 survey (released November 9, 2006) included many similar questions on political processes but was much broader in its sweep than the 2004 survey, polling 6,226 Afghans in 32 provinces with questions about trust, problem solving, security, women's rights, religion, and development.

The 2007 survey (released October 23, 2007) worked with a larger sample size of 6,263 and covered all 34 provinces.

The 2008 survey (released October 28, 2008) interviewed 6,593 Afghans from each of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

The 2009 survey (October 27, 2009) interviewed 6,406 Afghans from each of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The reduced sample size from the 2008 survey is due to the interviews that could not be conducted with female respondents in three provinces: Zabul, Uruzghan, and Paktika.

For 2010, the survey questionnaire was first revised in-house and then sent to donors for review and suggestions. With the aim to capture the opinions of Afghans after the Presidential and Provincial Council elections and before the September 2010 Parliamentary election, relevant questions in these subject areas were added to the basic questionnaire. Some standard questions were rephrased wherever it was felt that clearer and more useful responses could be obtained. Some design changes were also made to the sampling to increase the spread of the interviews to a larger area and avoid cases of homogeneity in responses due to closely clustered samples.

Q8. Why were questions about the September 2010 Parliamentary election added this year?

In addition to baseline questions included in the questionnaire since the survey's initial inception, topical questions about specific, timely issues are included each year. The survey is both a look at Afghan perceptions at a specific point in time and a tool to measure shifts in public opinion over a longer period of time.

Q9. Does this poll measure whether Afghans have become disillusioned since the outcome of the 2009 Presidential elections?

No, the poll was conducted during the same timeframe as previous polls, from June 18 – July 5, 2010, and captures the opinions of Afghans after the Presidential and Provincial Council elections and before the September 2010 Parliamentary election. Two months before the elections 78% of respondents were aware of the upcoming Parliamentary elections. 74% of registered voters said they were likely to vote including 39% who said this was very likely.

Q10. Will there be more surveys?

Yes. Similar surveys are planned for 2011.

Q11. What does The Asia Foundation think of the survey?

As with our past survey reports, The Asia Foundation's goal and role is not one of interpretation. Our role is to provide robust, useful, unique data that can illuminate the situation on the ground and provide context for policy relevant work. The survey report is an important piece of work completed during a difficult time in Afghanistan, but The Asia Foundation does not take a position on the findings.

We are pleased that by conducting these surveys repeatedly over several years we have built capacity in Afghanistan for Afghans to conduct such surveys, and we look forward to working closely with ACSOR, Kabul University, Afghan Government's Central Statistic Organization (CSO), and others in the coming months to continue our work.

Q12. Why does The Asia Foundation conduct this survey?

The Asia Foundation has established a reputation for developing sophisticated empirical surveys for use across Asia in order to pinpoint citizen concerns and needs, to gauge public support and development progress, and to inform important policy debate.

The survey is both a look at Afghan perceptions at a specific point in time and a tool to measure shifts in public opinion over a longer period of time. The aim is to gather first-hand opinion of a large sample of Afghan citizens on a variety of contemporary governance and development-related issues so that policy makers and opinion shapers in government, the international community, and the broader Afghan public can utilize valid and reliable data as they make decisions and craft future policy.

Q13. Will The Asia Foundation publish a companion analytical assessment this year?

The Asia Foundation will not publish a companion volume this year, but plan to offer the analytical assessment next year. In 2011, we expect our survey to track shifts in international policy approaches towards Afghanistan and the companion volume will provide considered interpretation and contextual analysis of the survey findings. Previously, we published companion volumes to the 2006 and 2008 surveys.

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