

CIDA Project: Afghanistan

Part I - Basic Facts

Population: 31,108,077

Capital and largest city: Kabul

Area: 652,225 sq km

Geographical coordinates: 33 00 N, 65 00 E

Major languages: Dari, Pashtu

Major religion: Islam

GDP per capita: \$1,000

Currency: Afghani

Main exports: Fruit and nuts, carpets, wool, opium

Life expectancy: 49 years for both men and women

Sources:

"Afghanistan Profile." *BBC News*. BBC, 25 Mar. 2013. Web. 28 May 2013.

"The World Factbook." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 28 May 2013.

"Afghanistan Country Profile: Human Development Indicators." *Human Development Reports*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 28 May 2013.



Figure 1 – A map of Afghanistan featuring the capital Kabul and other prominent cities.



Figure 1.1 - The flag of Afghanistan.



Figure 1.2 - Darul Aman's palace in Kabul, seen here destroyed by the 1992 civil war. In the foreground, an Afghan woman begs for food and money as a man cycles past with a young boy.



Figure 1.3 – The busiest open-air market in Kabul, Mandawi bazaar.



Figure 1.4 – Hazrat Ali mosque in Mazar-e Sharif. Both Sunnis and Shiites (two different Muslim groups) can gather to pray.



Figure 1.5— An increase in foreign capital after the ousting of the Taliban has resulted in a boom in car sales. Traffic is seen here in Kabul.

Geography and climate

Geography: Landlocked country in southern Asia

Terrain: mostly mountainous, plains in the north and southwest

Climate: Subarctic mountain climate; dry and cold winters, with hot and arid summers.

Current environmental issues: limited freshwater resources, limited resources of drinkable water, soil degradation, overgrazing, deforestation (for fuel and building materials), desertification, air and water pollution

Government

Government type: Islamic republic

Suffrage: 18 years of age, universal

Chief of State and Head of Government: President Hamid Karzai (Since December 7, 2004)

Cabinet: Ministers (of which there are currently 25) are appointed by the president and approved by the National Assembly

Elections: President and two vice presidents are elected by direct vote. They may serve up to two five-year terms. If no candidate receives a majority vote in the first round, the two candidates with the most votes enter a second round.

Economy

Most of labor force is in agriculture (78.6%), followed by services (15.7%) and industry (5.7%)

Population below poverty line: 36%

External debt: \$1.28 billion

Part II – Population Study

Population	31,108,077
Population density	52.72/km ²
Population growth rate	2.25%
Infant mortality rate	119.41 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth	50.11 years
Available health care	0.21 physicians/1,000 population
Adult literacy	62.7% of total population (UNESCO, 2011) Male: 74% Female: 51.8%
GDP (Per capita)	\$1,000
Water availability	48% of population (UNICEF, 2011)
AIDS	Adult prevalence rate of 0.01%
UN HDI Rank	175

Sources:

"The World Factbook." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 28 May 2013.

"Education (all Levels) Profile - Afghanistan." *UNESCO Institute for Statistics*. UNESCO, n.d. Web. 17 May 2013.

<<http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121>>.

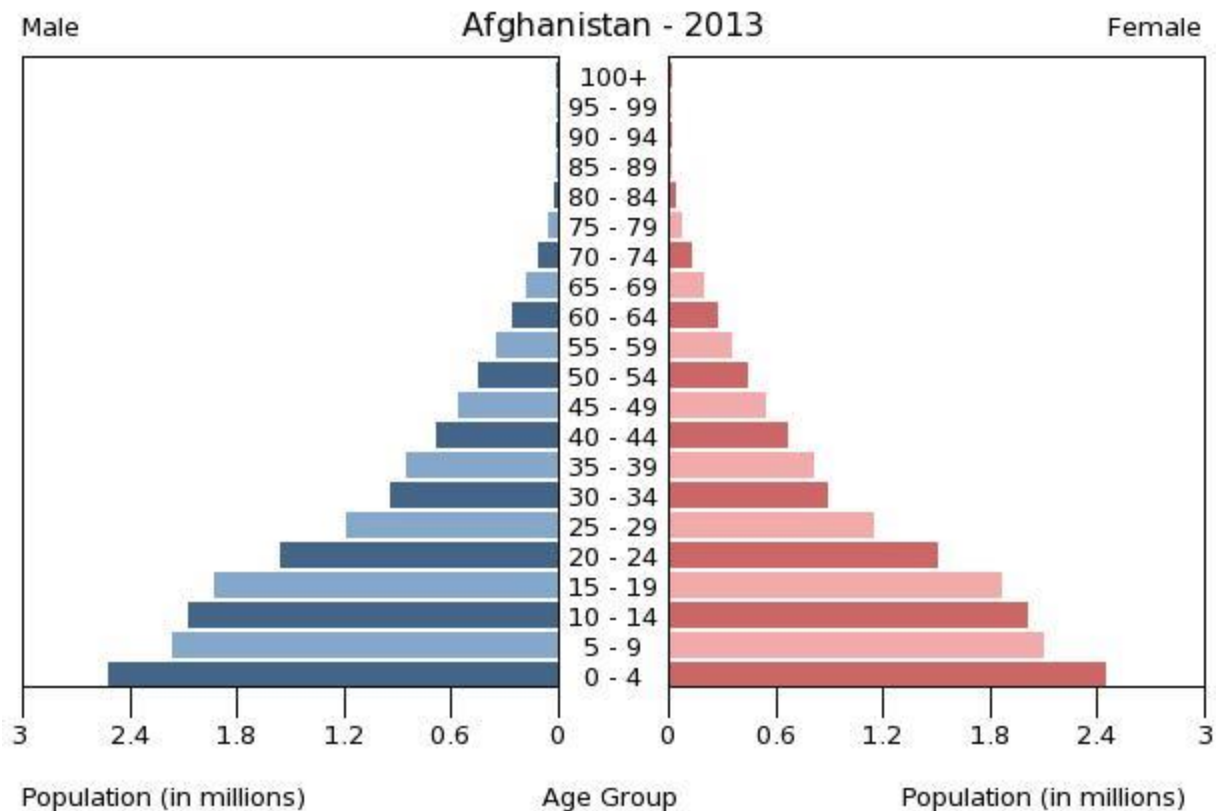


Figure 2 - Afghanistan's population pyramid for the year 2013. Source: CIA Factbook.

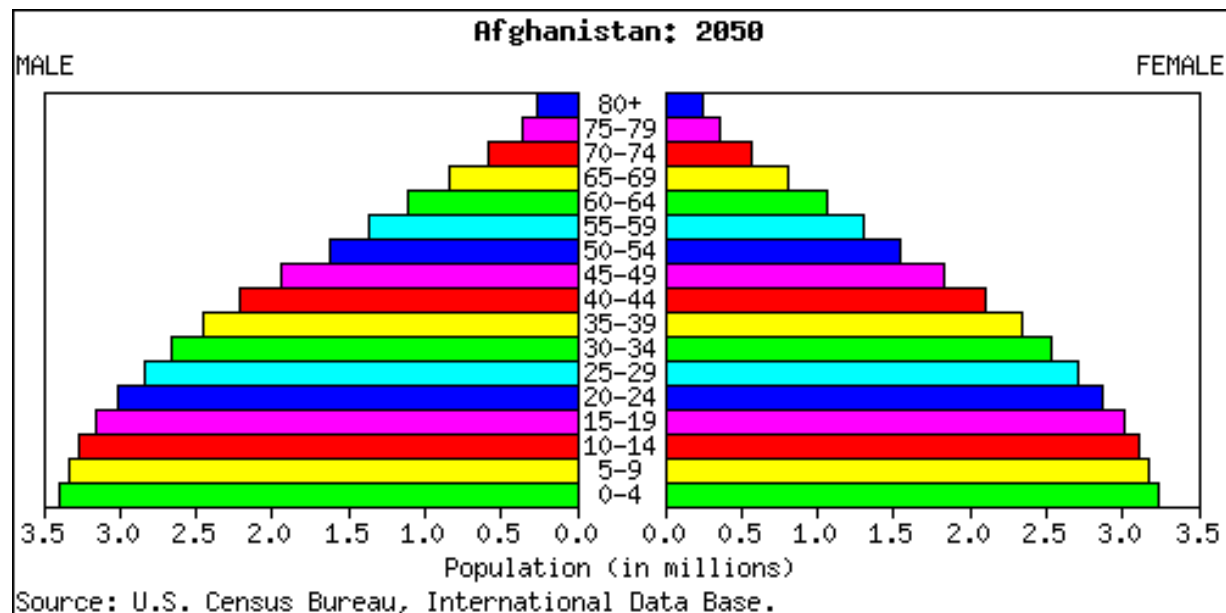


Figure 2.1 - Afghanistan's population pyramid for the year 2050

According to the 2013 population pyramid, Afghanistan is in the early expanding stage and stage 2 of the demographic transition model. There is a high birth rate and a high, but improving, death rate. Poor health care, lack of access to clean water and safe sanitation, poor education, high maternal death rates, and the devastating impacts of civil war have contributed to these numbers. Though decreasing, the dependency ratio as of 2011 is at 94%, indicating an alarmingly high number of people dependent on the labour force.¹ International assistance and government expenditures are spent mostly on the non-working population, and this spending is insufficient to support this high demographic.

By 2050, according to Figure , Afghanistan appears to be expanding and transitioning to stable. Further progress towards development will result in lower and more balanced birth rates and death rates, and a low population growth rate.

In rural areas, where families rely primarily on agriculture to support themselves, the birth rate is high to accommodate the need for assistance on farms. High death rates (in infants, children, and mothers) due to poor health care, safe water, and sanitation greatly contribute to the high birth rates. In addition, poor family planning and low status of women prevent the situation from improving. Afghanistan is currently at the early expanding stage because of the cycle caused by these root issues and they must be addressed before the population and dependency ratio can stabilize. Further incentive to lower the population growth rate is the availability of resources in the country. There is an already existing struggle for the government and international organizations to feed and support the population; further increase would deepen the problem and the negative impact on the environment.

¹ "Age Dependency Ratio (% of Working-age Population)." *The World Bank*. The World Bank Group, n.d. Web. 28 May 2013. <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND>>.

Part III – Living Standard

I. UN Human Development Index Rank

The UN Human Development Index ranks countries based on standards of living indicators, such as life expectation, GDP, and education. It must be noted that standard of living and quality of life are two distinct evaluations. Standard of living is an evaluation of the degree of wealth and material comfort that a country has. According to the HDI, Afghanistan ranks 175 out of a total 186 countries in standard of living. This places Afghanistan in a status of low human development.

II. Literacy and education



Figure 3 – A girl's class tent classroom at Phool-e-Rangeena Government School in Herat. Around 7,000 children attend classes that rotate in three daily shifts.

The total literate adult population is 62.7%.² The percentage of literate adult males (74%) is higher than the percentage of literate adult females (51.8%), a disparity suggesting that the quality and availability of education for women and girls are lower than that of males. For Afghan girls, the quality of education is inconsistent, conditions in school are inadequate, and almost half a million enrolled girls do not attend school on a regular basis.³ Girls also have a lower school life expectancy than that of boys, with 7 years of schooling compared to 11 years.⁴ Conflict and weakened security prevent

² "Education (all Levels) Profile - Afghanistan." UNESCO Institute for Statistics. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 May 2013. <<http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121>>.

³ "Gains in Girls' Education in Afghanistan Are at Risk: Real Lives." *Oxfam International*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 May 2013.

⁴ "The World Factbook." Central Intelligence Agency. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 28 May 2013.

enrolment, adequate staffing, and availability of school supplies; cultural norms also discourage girls from attending school.⁵

III. Status of Women



Figure 3.1 – Women hold a protest in Kabul against the Shi'a Family Law in 2009. The Law has garnered criticism for legalizing marital rape, among other rights infringements.

There are a number of traditions being practiced in Afghanistan that are harmful to girls and women. Women and girls face discrimination and marginalization in a patriarchal society, which dictate their roles and positions as subordinate to men. Harmful traditions include forced marriage, exchanging or engaging children in marriage as a result of poverty or dispute settlements, restricting freedom of movement, and “honour killings”.⁶ Women are also isolated at home, restricting their social, political, and economical involvement. Women and girls face threats such as gender based violence, violence on schools, and discrimination.⁷

Progress for women's rights has slowly improved in the wake of the brutal Taliban regime (1996 – 2001).⁸ However, the Karzai administration had introduced the Shi'a Family Law in February 2009 which seriously infringed upon the rights of Shi'a Afghan women. The law states that women can only leave their homes for “legitimate” reasons, women can only go to work or school with their husbands' permission, men do not need the consent of their wives to have sexual intercourse, and women do not have the right to keep their children after a divorce or inherit property from their husbands.⁹

⁵ "Factsheet." *UNICEF*. N.p., Nov. 2011. Web. 12 May 2013.

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/ACO_Education_Factsheet_-_November_2011_.pdf>.

⁶ *Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation*. Rep. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 9 Dec. 2010. Web. 17 May 2013.

⁷ "Afghanistan Common Humanitarian Action Plan 2013." *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 23 May 2013.

⁸ Bajoria, Jayshree. "The Taliban in Afghanistan." *Council on Foreign Relations*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 May 2013.

⁹ "Life as an Afghan Woman." *Trust in Education RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 May 2013.

Though this law only pertains to less than 20% of the total Afghan women population, it is reflective of the need for massive improvement for the women's rights situation in Afghanistan.

These issues can be traced to the role of women in society; they are seen as the property of men. Not only are women sold or forced into marriage, but they also suffer from widespread domestic abuse, both physical and psychological.¹⁰

IV. Status of Children



Figure 3.2 – Children in a food distribution lineup provided by UNICEF at the Maslakh refugee camp in western Afghanistan.

According to the 2012 State of the World's Mothers report by Save the Children, Afghanistan was the second worst place in the world to be a child among the 165 countries ranked. The rankings are based on health, education, and economic conditions for women and children.¹¹ Afghanistan has the highest infant mortality rate in the world, and the 21st highest maternal mortality rate¹². This makes Afghanistan's infant and maternal mortality rates some of the highest in the world. More than half of all children suffer stunted growth. Immunization availability is poor, killing thousands of children per year with preventable diseases. Pneumonia, diseases, and diarrhea are the top causes

¹⁰ *Economic and Social Rights Report in Afghanistan-III*. Rep. Human Security Research Group, Dec. 2008. Web. 13 May 2013.

¹¹ "Chronic Malnutrition and Child Survival - Facts and Stats." *Save the Children*. Save the Children Federation, Inc., n.d. Web. 13 May 2013.

¹² "Country Comparison: Maternal Mortality Rate." *Central Intelligence Agency*. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 May 2013. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2223rank.html?countryName=Afghanistan>>.

of death in children under 5.¹³ Landmines and child trafficking are also threats to child freedom and security.¹⁴

V. Access to health services, disease issues, sanitation, and safe water



Figure 3.3 - A 24-year-old woman rests on the floor after walking for two days with her mother-in-law to reach the Mirwais hospital in Kandahar.

Long periods of civil unrest and war have seriously impeded the delivery of effective health services in Afghanistan. Following the end of the Taliban regime and government restructuring in 2002, health care services were conducted mainly by nongovernmental organizations. The public health care system was poor, and severe underfunding results in inadequate staffing, an inability to offer basic health services like medicine, and lack of public health facilities. However, substantial progress has been made since 2002; more than 60 percent of the population lives within a one-hour walking distance to a hospital, compared to 9 percent in 2002, and infant and child mortality has decreased significantly. Increased labor and delivery support has resulted in lower maternal mortality ratios.¹⁵ Security, lack of infrastructure and trained health

¹³ "Afghanistan: Health Profile." *World Health Organization*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 May 2013. <<http://www.who.int/gho/countries/afg.pdf>>.

¹⁴ "Afghanistan." *UNICEF*. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 May 2013. <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan_background.html>.

¹⁵ "Increasing Access of Women and Children to Quality Basic Health Services." *U.S. Agency for International Development*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 May 2013. <<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/programs/health>>.

workers, poor economy, limited access to facilities, and poor conditions in facilities continue to interfere with the quality of health care in Afghanistan.¹⁶



Figure 3.4 – Refugees in the Parwan-e-duo slum in Kabul must face a shortage of clean water and no proper sanitation.

The risk of contracting infectious disease in Afghanistan is high. Major infectious diseases in this country are diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, malaria, and rabies.¹⁷ This degree of risk can be attributed to the poor public health care system, inadequate education and information on how to prevent or recognize infectious disease, poor sanitation practices, and inadequate access to potable water. Only 48% of the population has access to safe drinking water, and an even lesser 37% have access to safe sanitation. Underdeveloped infrastructure has made it difficult for communities to develop clean water sources, and communities in remote, drought-prone regions are under greater risk of exposure to water-borne illness because they must get water from potentially unsafe lakes or streams.¹⁸

¹⁶ Acerra, John R., Kara Iskyan, Zubair A. Qureshi, and Rahul K. Sharma. "Rebuilding the Health Care System in Afghanistan: An Overview of Primary Care and Emergency Services." *National Center for Biotechnology Information*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, 05 June 2009. Web. 16 May 2013.

¹⁷ "The World Factbook." *Central Intelligence Agency*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May 2013.
<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>>.

¹⁸ "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene." *UNICEF*. N.p., Nov. 2011. Web. 22 May 2013.
<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/ACO_WASH_Factsheet_-_November_2011.pdf>.

VI. Food security and nutrition levels

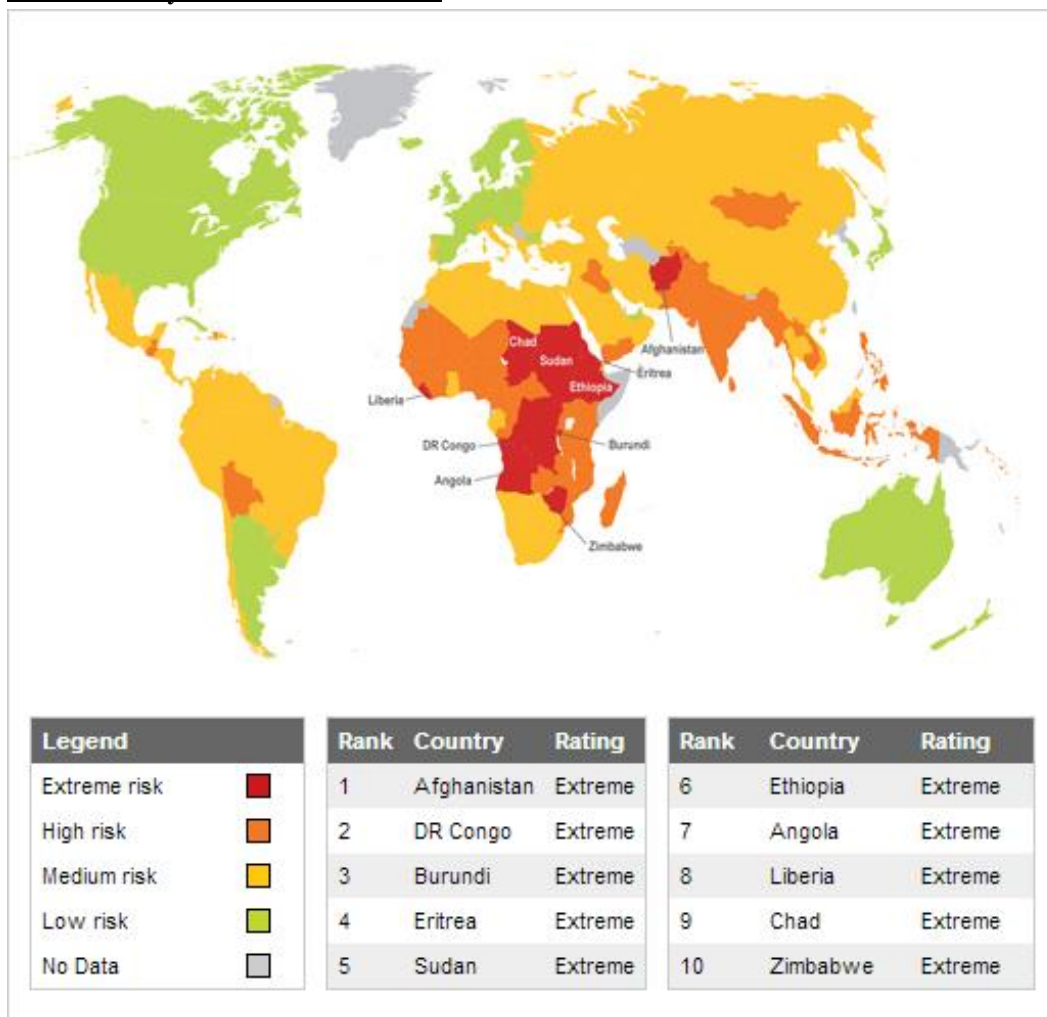


Figure 3.5 – Maplecroft's Food Security Risk Index 2010. Afghanistan is rated as least secure in food supplies.

Although Afghanistan's harvest in 2012 was exceptionally productive and contributed to easier access of food for many people, food insecurity still remains a problem for the nation.¹⁹ In fact, food insecurity has become a chronic, growing problem in most provinces, and 34% of the population is suffering from this poor food availability. This is due to chronic drought, insufficient agricultural infrastructure, and the fact that many people cannot access markets.²⁰ The hardest hit demographics regarding food insecurity are girls under five years of age and seniors (people over 65

¹⁹ "Afghanistan Food Security Outlook - July to December 2012." *Famine Early Warning Systems Network*. U.S. Agency for International Development, n.d. Web. 23 May 2013.

²⁰ "Afghanistan Common Humanitarian Action Plan 2013." *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 23 May 2013.

years).²¹ In 2010, Maplecroft's Global Risks Portfolio put Afghanistan as having the most extreme risk of food insecurity in the world.

Malnutrition is a severe issue in Afghanistan and is one of the major contributors to child mortality. It can result in stunted growth – where mental and physical growth development is slowed and impaired. The national poverty rate is at 36%, and 33% of children are underweight.²² Southern Afghanistan, a region still affected by insurgency conflict, has the highest levels of child malnutrition in the country at 29.5%.²³

A lack of education and information (where women do not know how to adequately nourish their children), low income, and the poor access to basic health services contribute to the high levels of malnutrition. A lack of proper breastfeeding practices also puts infants at risk of poor nutrition levels and stunting.²⁴

VII. Environmental sustainability



Figure 3.6 – Piles of garbage near a road in Kabul, taken during International Environmental Day. Aside from the environmental impacts arising from agriculture, waste and litter is also becoming a fast-growing issue.

Quality of water is connected to environmental standards in Afghanistan, and (as mentioned under “Access to health services, disease issues, sanitation, and safe water”)

²¹ "Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Study Draft." *Food Security and Agriculture Cluster*. N.p., 2012. Web. 23 May 2013.

²² "Afghanistan Humanitarian Aid for Children." *Save the Children*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 May 2013.

²³ Graham-Harrison, Emma. "Prevalence of Malnutrition in Southern Afghanistan 'shocking'" *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 04 Sept. 2012. Web. 24 May 2013.

²⁴ Coren, Anna. "Afghan Malnourished Hit by Poverty and Education." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 16 Oct. 2012. Web. 24 May 2013.

only 48% of the population has access to safe and unpolluted water. Polluted air and water puts many Afghans at risk of diseases such as birth defects and respiratory diseases.²⁵ The cutting down of timber trees for fuel is greatly reducing forests and vegetation, and over-grazing is lowering soil productivity and rendering it vulnerable to wind and rain erosion.²⁶ Increases in population will result in a greater use of resources, further impacting the degradation of forests, especially in rural areas where reliance on solid fuels is high and the quality of water is more vulnerable.²⁷ It should be noted that the quality of potable water and sanitation is directly related to the quality of the environment. Poor waste management, lack of clean water infrastructure, and overuse of natural resources is reflective of poor environmental standards. Environmental sustainability is not high on the government's agenda for development; for now, progress is primarily focused on areas such as education, eradication of hunger, and health.

VIII. Government finances (debt, revenues)



Figure 3.7 – The Afghan Finance Minister and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan sign the 2010 debt relief agreement in Kabul.

Afghanistan's foreign debt, as of 2010/2011, is \$1.28 billion, a reduction from their foreign debt amount in 2008/2009 at \$2.7 billion.²⁸ This considerable reduction in debt can be partly attributed to debt relief given from the World Bank's International

²⁵ Haidari, Mohammad Nasim. "Pollution Causes Series of Serious Diseases." *Daily Outlook Afghanistan, the Leading Independent Newspaper*. Afghanistan Group of Newspapers, 6 June 2011. Web. 27 May 2013.

²⁶ Vidal, John. "A Planet at War with Itself." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 14 Sept. 2010. Web. 27 May 2013.

²⁷ "Ensure Environmental Sustainability (Goal 7)." *United Nations Development Programme*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 27 May 2013. <<http://www.undp.org.af/MDGs/goal7.htm>>.

²⁸ "Field Listing: Debt - External." *Central Intelligence Agency*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 May 2013. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2079.html>>.

Development Association and International Monetary Fund. To receive the debt relief, Afghanistan reached the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Government reforms on fiscal management include efforts to begin Afghanistan's National Development Strategy (ANDS), an initiative to improve security, government, promote economic growth, and reduce poverty.²⁹ Furthermore, debt management reforms, mining sector advancements, and enhanced "transparency and accountability in health and education services" have been made, despite trying circumstances in the nation.³⁰ These achievements are reflective of the Afghani government's commitment to economic progress and development. However, Afghanistan is still at risk for debt distress due to its necessary reliance on foreign aid, and considerable progress must be made by the government to achieve the goals outlined in ANDS.

Other factors in the recovering of Afghanistan's economy include growth in the agricultural and service sectors, and international aid. Low revenue collection (such as from taxes), corruption, and insufficient government capacity are other issues that the government must address before their financial management can become further stabilized.³¹

IX. Governance

Figure 3.8 – An Afghan policeman with a Kalashnikov rifle in the village of Sanjaray, Zhari District.



Afghanistan's politics and government has been unstable due to decades of conflict and the destructive former Taliban rule. An official, high-functioning, and self-sustaining government is needed in order for Afghanistan to stabilize and progress when U.S. and NATO military forces completely withdraw in late 2014.³²

According to the CIA Factbook, the President of Afghanistan (currently Hamid Karzai) is also the Head of State and government, and Commander in Chief. Karzai holds the most power over the Afghan government (which largely takes on an executive role), the legislature, and the judiciary. Elections are held every five years. The

²⁹ "Afghanistan National Development Strategy." *United Nations Development Programme*. United Nations, 2008. Web. 27 May 2013.

³⁰ *IMF and World Bank Announce US\$1.6 Billion in Debt Relief to Afghanistan*. The World Bank. The World Bank Group, 26 Jan. 2010. Web. 27 May 2013.

³¹ "The World Factbook." *Central Intelligence Agency*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 May 2013. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>>.

³² Landler, Mark, and Helene Cooper. "Obama Will Speed Military Pullout From Afghan War." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 22 June 2011. Web. 27 May 2013.

country has a representative government (where legislature is at least partly elected), and the capital city Kabul is where the National Assembly operates. The President has considerable authority over law-making and appoints one-third of the senate (called the Upper House in the National Assembly).³³ Outside of the role of President, government power is limited. The National Assembly (which assumes a legislative role, the parliament) has limited authority over financial matters such as budget, and issues such as possible corruption within the Assembly and its insufficient staffing and resources hurt its role as an effective check.³⁴ Parties are not a significant factor in government, and voting is a simple process, where a voter casts one ballot and the individual candidates with the most votes fill a seat. Legislator-voter relations are poor, and politicians do not have much incentive to join a political party. Parties have no appeal to the voters due to decades of civil conflict and unstable security.³⁵

X. Culture

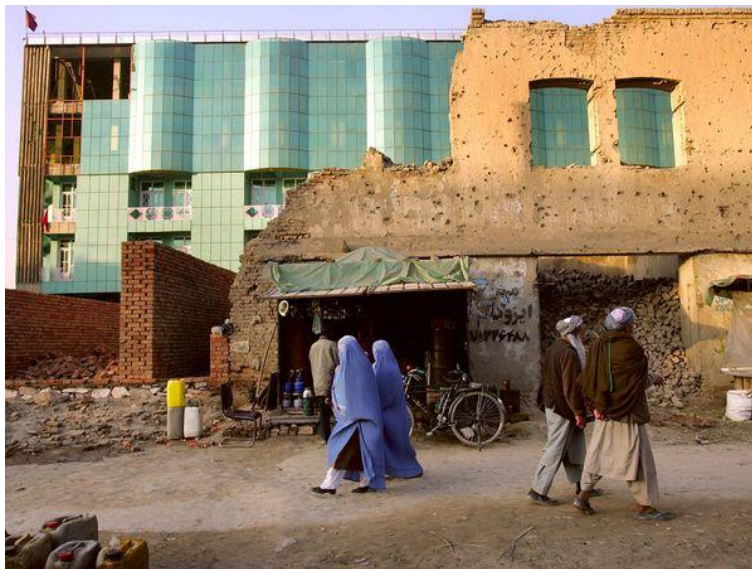


Figure 3.9 – A modern hotel being constructed behind a war-destroyed building in Kabul. Foreign aid and investment has resulted in an unprecedented rise in construction, mainly in the capital city.

Islam is the predominant faith in Afghanistan and is a significant aspect in the lives of Afghans, including their political, economic, and legal affairs. Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan, and weekend days are Thursday and Friday (Friday being the Muslim holy day).³⁶ Family, hospitality, and proper etiquette are important aspects of Afghani society; for example, food is eaten with one's hands, and one must

³³ Cookman, Colin, and Caroline Wadhams. "Governance in Afghanistan." *Center for American Progress*. Center for American Progress, May 2010. Web. 27 May 2013.

³⁴ Canas, Vitalino. *Governance Challenges in Afghanistan*. Issue brief. NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2010. Web. 27 May 2013. <<http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=2085>>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Afghanistan - Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." *Kwintessential*. Kwintessential Ltd., n.d. Web. 27 May 2013.

never eat with their left hand.³⁷ Honour is a deep facet of culture and society, and determines whether or not a person is accepted in society. Disgracing oneself in regards to moral code, social norms, and the general climate of one's community greatly impacts self-identity.³⁸ Furthermore, guilt by association implicates an individual's family and friends if they deviate from the social system. This tribal collectivism (acting in accordance with one's family and group) results in the strict conduct between males and females in society. Islamic law and societal norms dictate how the roles of men and women; for example, many women are required to wear a burka or chadri in public in order to protect their honour and their family's honour.³⁹ However, tribal collectivism can create divides in Afghan society, and some of these deeply-rooted traditions negatively affect women and impede the advancement of their rights.

Many of Afghanistan's arts are rooted in traditional culture. Examples include intricate carpet-making (the country is known for its high-quality oriental rugs), folk songs and ballads with traditional music instruments, classic poetry, and world-recognized architecture.⁴⁰ Popular Afghan dishes include kofta (meatballs) and kebabs, various rice dishes, fresh fruits (such as grapes, which grow well in Afghanistan's climate), bread, and yogurts.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mohammadi, Latif. "Politics of Afghan Culture: Collectivism, Honor and Shame." *Tehran Times*. Tehran Times, 6 July 2011. Web. 27 May 2013.

³⁹ "Society and Norms: Gender Roles: Overview." *Operational Cultural Awareness Training*. University of West Florida, n.d. Web. 27 May 2013.
<<http://uwf.edu/atcdev/afghanistan/society/Lesson3GenderRoles1overview.html>>.

⁴⁰ "Culture of Afghanistan." *Central-Asia.info*. Central-Ssia.info, n.d. Web. 27 May 2013.

⁴¹ "Food in Afghanistan." *SAARC Tourism*. South Asia Tourism Society, n.d. Web. 28 May 2013.

Part IV – Population distribution and resources



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Figure 3 – A map of Afghanistan with surrounding countries, capital and major cities, transportation, and major physical features. Afghanistan is a landlocked and mountainous country.

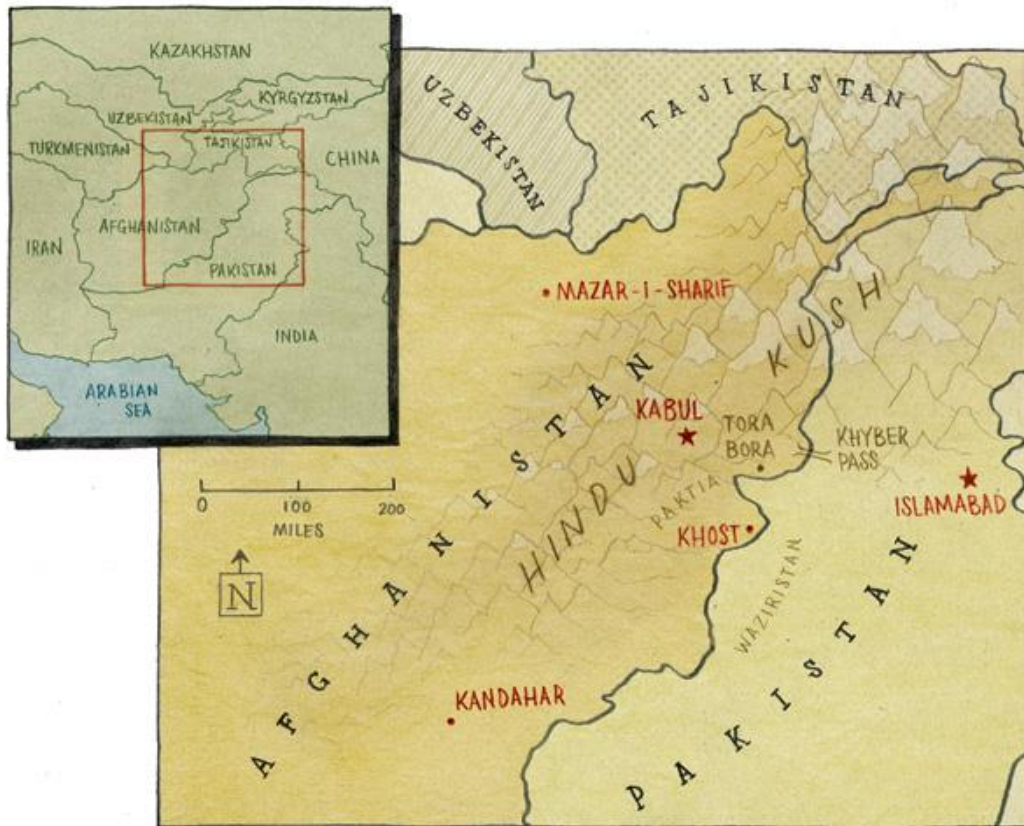


Figure 3.1 – The Hindu Kush mountain range.

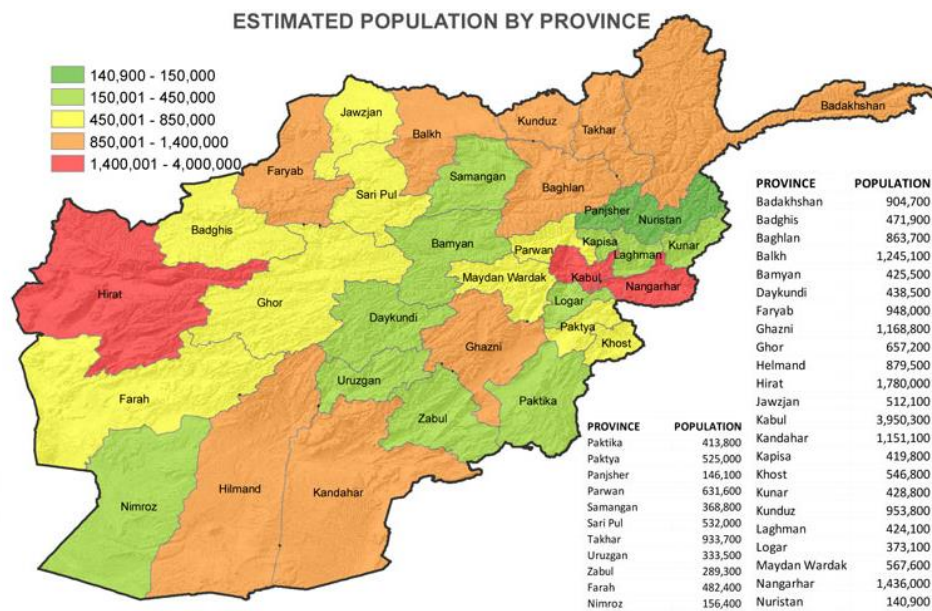
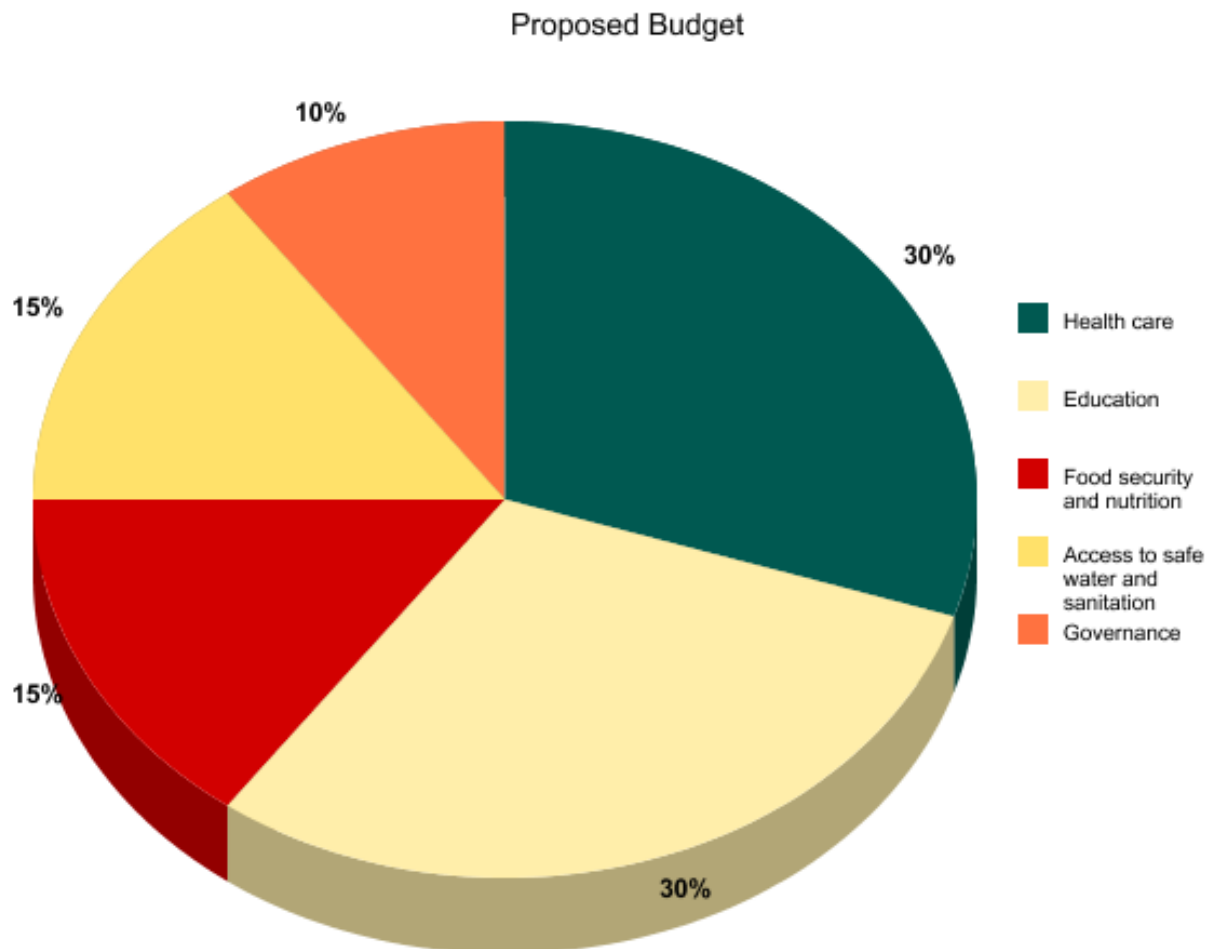


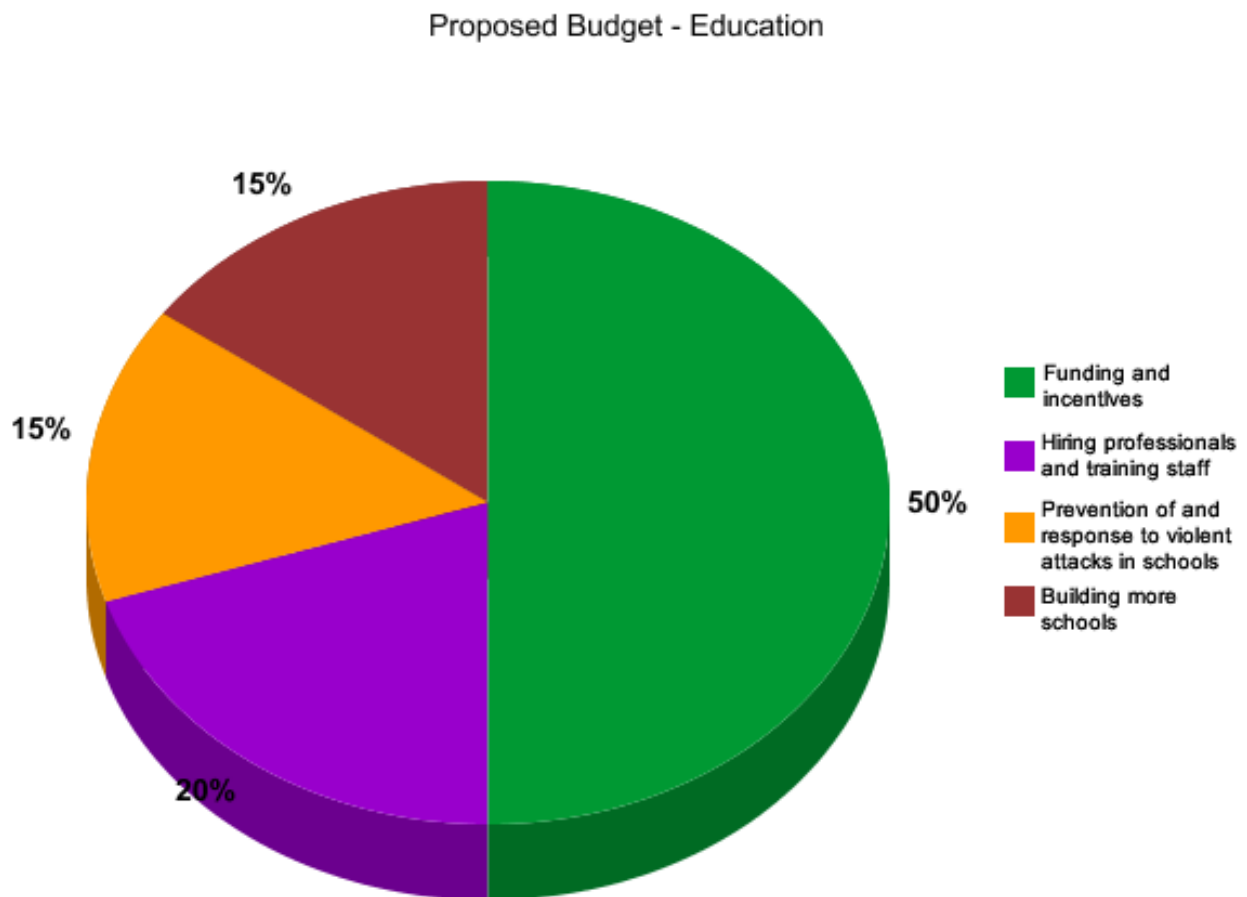
Figure 3.2 – Afghanistan population estimates by province. The provinces Kabul, Nangarhar, and Hirat have the densest populations.

Part V – Budget and Analysis



Above is the proposed budget for the five sectors of development that require the most attention. Of the \$100, 000, 000 in monetary aid that will be given in total, 30% each will go towards health care and education. By addressing core issues such as overall health and level of education first, short-term and long-term benefits are expected. 15% each will go towards improving food security and nutrition, and access to safe water and sanitation, as these are significant issues. Progress will be gradual, but the immediate effects will benefit much of the population. 10% of the budget will then be assigned to improving governance, with the primary focus of beginning a democratic government that will be organized and self-sustaining when U.S. and NATO military forces withdraw in 2014. By addressing the root causes of poverty and instability in Afghanistan, the resulting progress will create a domino effect that will benefit other areas of the country.

Education



Quality of education is an integral part of human development. By educating the population, all aspects of their lives can be improved. Birth rate will decrease as a result of knowledge on contraceptives; individuals can learn about and undergo training on different professions, thus stimulating and diversifying the economy; basic knowledge on health and disease issues, nutrition, and safe sanitation and water will lower mortality rates. Half of the education budget will be spent on funding for schools and providing incentives for students.

Funding will be used to **enhance and maintain the quality of education** being taught. Along with subjects such as mathematics, writing, and history, topics such as health, career, and social studies will be explored. Opportunities would be opened for any individual who wishes to start or continue their education, with an emphasis on children and youth. School conditions would also be improved, and basic supplies would be given for every classroom.

Through education, the status of women and girls will improve. By encouraging girls to attend school regularly and giving them - and all students in general – incentive, social, political, and economic roles for women can shift. Educated women recognize and can fight for their rights, enter different professions and access high positions, have a lower fertility rate, and have a better understanding of health and nutrition. Through funding, **incentives for all students will include free school supplies, low or no tuition fees, free lunches, and clean sanitation facilities**. Oftentimes, parents keep their children from attending school to work and do household chores, especially for girls. Through incentives, more students and more girls can go to school regularly and receive a quality education.

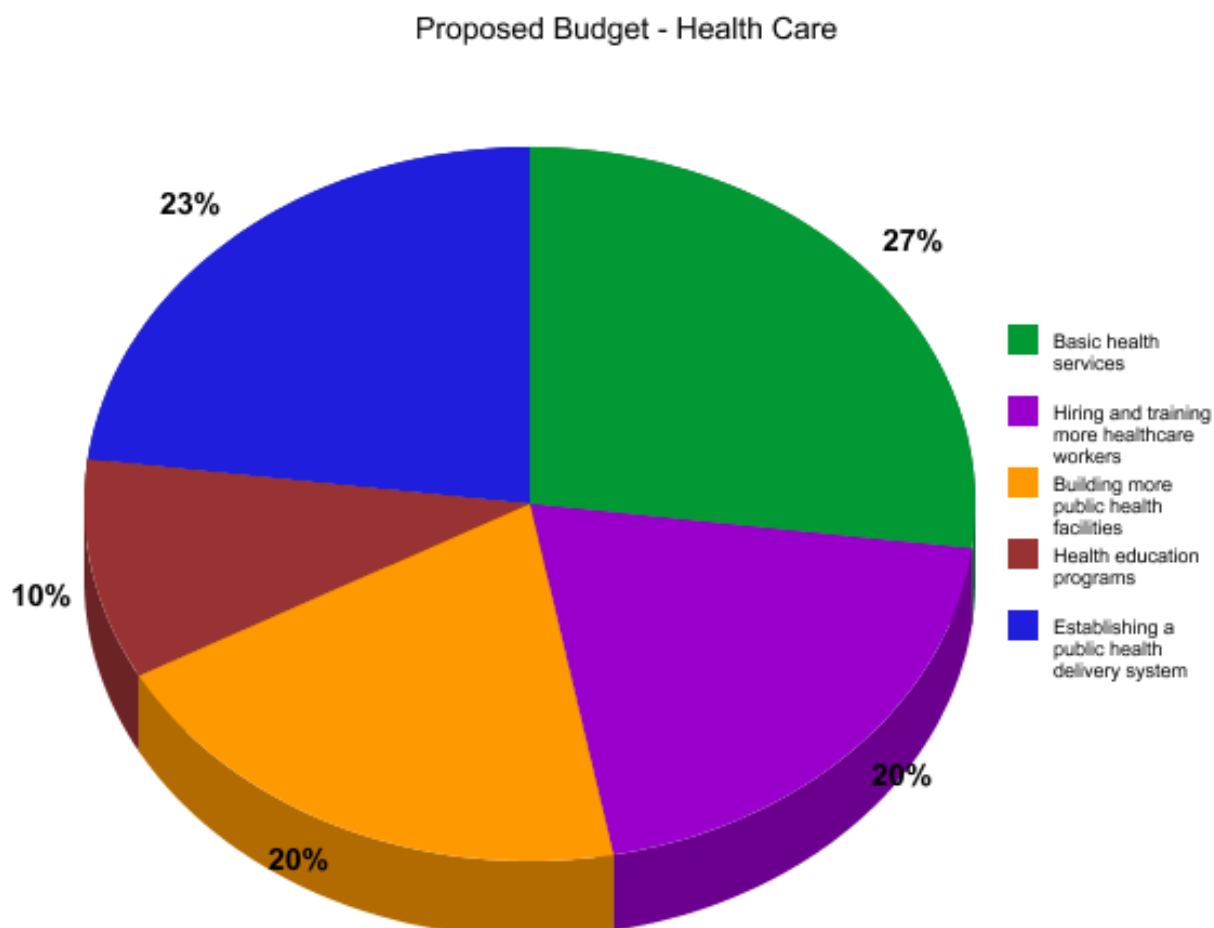
To handle the higher quality of education, 20% of the proposed education budget will go towards **hiring and training teachers and staff**. Capacity needs to be addressed, and along with increased staff, more schools need to be built. Inadequate space sometimes forces students, and especially girls, to stop attending school. Crowded facilities and social norms against boys and girls studying together result in girls' classes being relegated to tents outside, or in corridors.⁴² Funding to **build more schools** will address this issue.

Unfortunately in Afghanistan and other parts of the world, violent attacks are carried out on school personnel, students, and school buildings. The number of attacks, primarily perpetrated by the Taliban, has not dissipated over the years. These incidents include damage or destruction to buildings by “arson, grenades, mines and rockets”. Teachers and officials have been threatened, students, teachers and staff have been killed, and looting has taken place.⁴³ 15% of the money has been set aside to **prevent and provide response to violent attacks on schools and education**. These measures will include the cooperation of international courts and the Afghan government to find and implement adequate deterrents, and hold the perpetrators accountable. A task force should be assigned to monitor and protect schools, and be able to relocate staff and students to alternative areas. Schools will also be rebuilt in light of an attack. Attacks on schools should be met with zero tolerance, and respect for education should be promoted in Afghan society. Not only is this a serious threat to education, but is a human rights issue that needs to be addressed internationally and within Afghanistan.

⁴² "Gains in Girls' Education in Afghanistan Are at Risk: Real Lives." *Oxfam International*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 May 2013.

⁴³ O'Malley, Brendan. *Education under Attack 2010*. Publication. UNESCO, 2010. Web. 30 May 2013. <<http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/186809e.pdf#page=167>>.

Health care



Health care in Afghanistan has primarily been provided by non-governmental organizations, and the public health care is insufficient and inadequate. The proposed budget for health care will be spent with long-term sustainability in mind. If Afghanistan has a reliable and high quality health care that can maintain itself, immediate effects will accompany the gradual process. Mortality rates will decrease (especially for infants, children, and mothers), disease can be prevented and treated, and an increased number of the population will have access to more timely and effective health services.

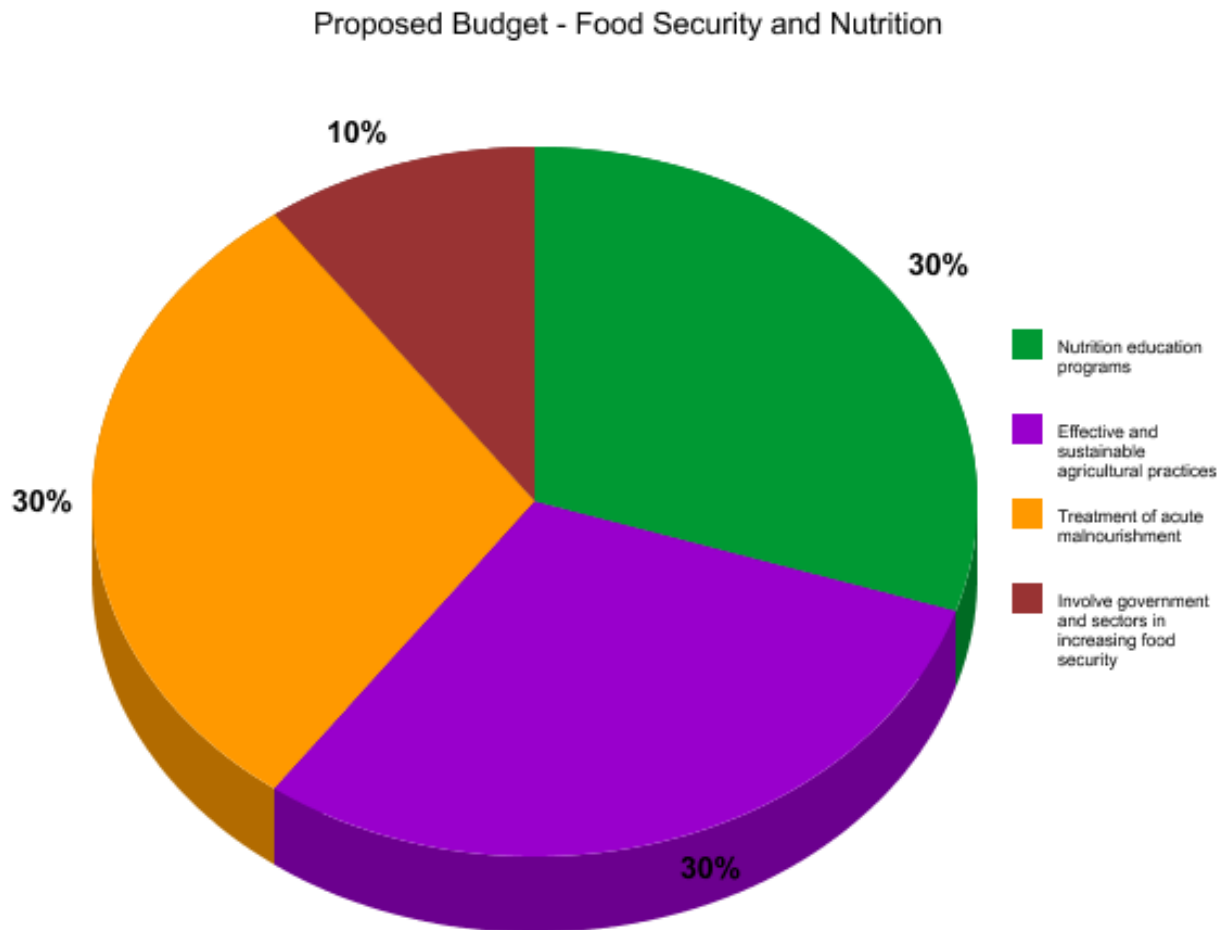
To **train and hire more healthcare workers**, 20% of the proposed budget will be given. There are only 0.21 physicians per 1,000 people in Afghanistan, and increasing the number of workers will heighten capacity and enable for more people to receive treatment and diagnosis sooner. Similarly, **more health care facilities will be built** to increase availability and access. Closer proximity to hospitals and clinics will encourage people to seek treatment, and those who need to do so will not have to travel far to receive it. To fund building (or organizing; some clinics or hospitals can be temporarily placed in tents), 20% of the health care budget will be assigned.

To increase awareness and knowledge on general health and disease issues, 10% of the health care budget will fund **health education programs**. Disease rates will be lowered with increased public knowledge on how to prevent contracting or transmitting diseases. Other topics will include contraception, the importance of vaccinations,

23% of the health care budget will be spent on establishing a public health care service. A health care system run by NGOs is only a short-term solution, and privatized health care results in higher costs, poor quality care, and unequal access.⁴⁴ Fostering a reliable and efficient public health care system will increase long-term sustainability. Funds will be used to help the transition (considering limited public and ministry finances), and to find and implement strategies to strengthen the capacity of the public health care system. With an effective public health care system, quality of services will be more consistent and affordable.

⁴⁴ Sabri, B., S. Siddiqi, AM Ahmed, FK Kakar, and J. Perrot. "Towards Sustainable Delivery of Health Services in Afghanistan: Options for the Future." *WHO*. World Health Organization, Sept. 2007. Web. 31 May 2013.

Food security and nutrition



Nutrition is a health issue, but because it is a major concern in Afghanistan, a portion of the proposed budget is dedicated solely to increasing food security and combating high malnutrition rates. Prevention and intervention of malnutrition must start from birth to address the issue of stunting in children, possibly causing irreparable damage. Increased nutrition rates will contribute to higher productivity in school, work, and lives in general. It is also important to note that a healthy (as well as educated and economically stable) population is less vulnerable to the influences of violent political and religious groups like the Taliban or the Al-Qaeda. Aside from treating malnutrition, measures must be taken to prevent it and implement sustainable strategies to maintain nutrition and food security that involves the government and the country as a whole.

Firstly, 30% of the proposed nutrition budget will be assigned to **treatment of the acutely malnourished**, with a higher priority towards infants and children. This is to prevent developmental stunting and helps to ensure that they are healthy enough to attend school. Treatment will include administering ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) such as Plumpy'nut, a peanut based nutritional paste, and BP-100, a solid form of therapeutic milk.

RUTFs can be widely distributed and administered at home, making them easily accessible and easy to use. Another high-priority group is pregnant woman. Treatment will be given to ensure that the mother and child have adequate vitamins and minerals to ensure that fetal development is not impaired and that maternal health is improved.

Another 30% of the budget will fund **nutrition education programs**. A lack of information about proper nutrition and feeding practices is a significant contributor to malnutrition, especially among children. Misinformation has resulted in poor infant feeding practices in Afghanistan, and women must be educated on the importance of breast feeding in infants under six months old, and the proper transition to solid foods. The programs will also educate on the necessary vitamins and minerals needed for function and development, and the importance of feeding during disease (especially in children, where sickness can greatly minimize chances of survival for the malnourished.)

To **find and implement effective and sustainable agricultural practices** in Afghanistan, 30% of the food security budget will be assigned. Over-grazing is lowering soil productivity, and droughts make food security unstable. Changes must be made to increase productivity while ensuring long-term and environmental sustainability in agriculture. The desired outcomes of these food security measures must include at least these three things:

- **Biodiversity in food and agriculture:** Biodiversity is vital in ensuring food security in any nation. A diversified agricultural sector is better in withstanding changes in global food prices, increased food security by avoiding the reliance of just several main crops or livestock, and a stronger economy. Households that are reliant on agriculture and livestock activities for income are particularly vulnerable to poverty. This is a result of an industry that is highly sensitive to fluctuating world prices.
- **Environmentally sustainable:** To ensure long-term supportability, agricultural and livestock practices must be environmentally sustainable. A portion of the funding will go towards research and implementation of practices that reduce erosion and reduce climate change effects. For example, crop rotation is a more environmentally sustainable and productive agricultural practice.⁴⁵
- **Increased productivity:** Along with environmentally sustainable practices to maintain soil quality, the climate in Afghanistan must be taken into consideration. Drought is an issue that can severely impact crops, and measures must be taken to respond to such circumstances. A land planning system, and soil, crop, and water management techniques can mitigate drought.⁴⁶

An enhanced and stable agricultural industry will not only provide stronger food security, but also increase the number of jobs. These will include jobs in related industries such as textiles and cloth manufacturing (ex. Use of goat wool), food production, and veterinary medicine.

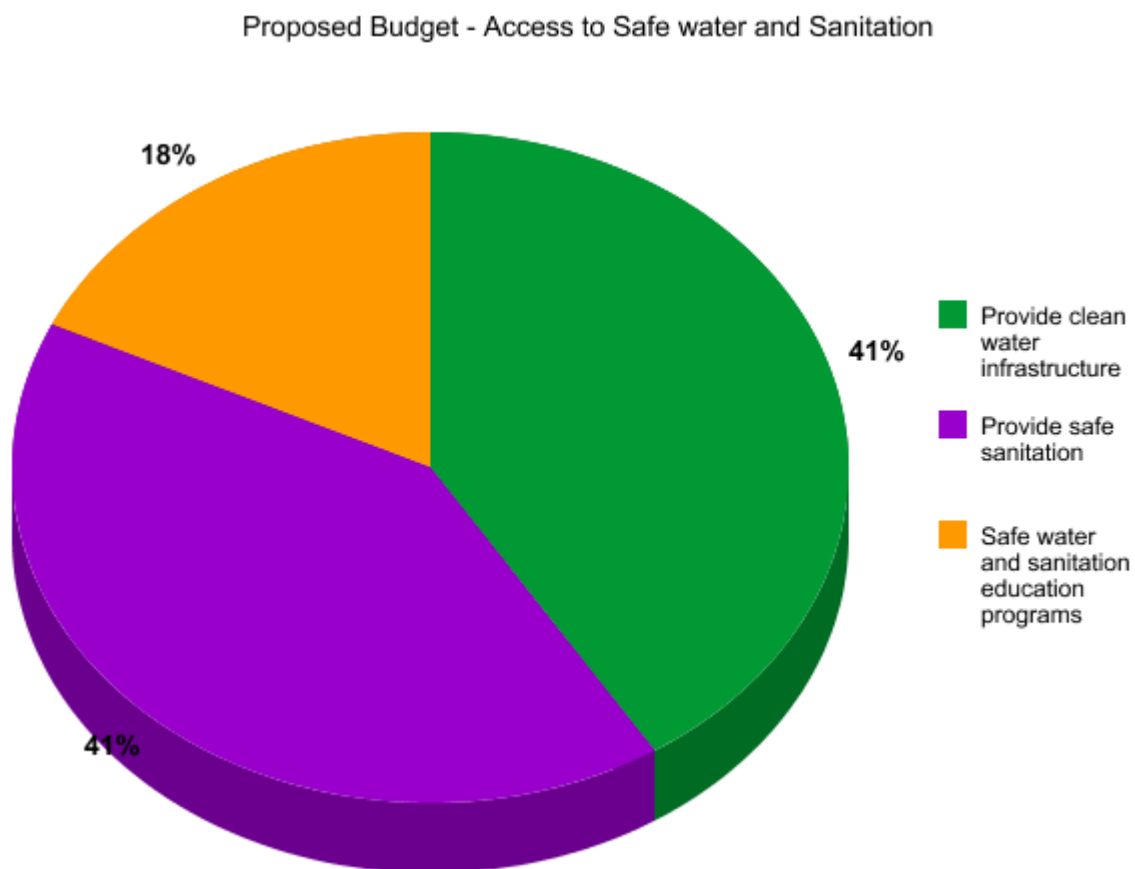
⁴⁵ "Sustainable Agriculture." *WWF*. World Wildlife Fund, n.d. Web. 02 June 2013.

<http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/teacher_resources/webfieldtrips/sus_agriculture/>.

⁴⁶ "How Can We Mitigate Drought?" *VASAT*. The Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics, n.d. Web. 02 June 2013. <<http://vasat.icrisat.org/?q=node/278>>.

The rest of the proposed food security budget (10%) will be used to fund initiatives and programs to **involve the government and other sectors in increasing food security**. These will include education, transport, gender equality, the food industry, and other sectors. This is to improve the quality and continuity of food security, and increase food quantity.⁴⁷ Government involvement will also increase long-term sustainability. Although it is unrealistic to assume that the Afghan government will be able to fix the food security issue by itself, involvement will provide the framework for self-sustainability in the future.

Access to safe water and sanitation



Wide, reliable, and easy access to safe water and sanitation is essential in curbing disease rates in developing countries. Contaminated water sources and a lack of proper sanitation facilities are a major health concern. As outlined in Section V of Part III – Living Standards, less than half of the total population has access to safe water and sanitation sources. Communities with greater need and higher risk of contracting illnesses from poor conditions will be given

⁴⁷ World Bank. Issue brief no. 77216. The World Bank Group, 2013. Web. 2 June 2013.
<<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NUTRITION/Resources/281846-1271963823772/Afghanistan.pdf>>.

higher priority. More safe sanitation facilities will be built, and the remaining will be used to fund programs to promote sanitation and hygiene.

41% of the proposed budget for this section will fund **building of clean water infrastructure** across Afghanistan. To do this, wells and pipe schemes will be built, and water treatment units distributed to households. Provincial governments will be involved in the planning and maintenance of this infrastructure, and Afghanistan's physical geography will be taken into account. Another 41% will be used to **build safe sanitation facilities** across the nation to increase access. Groundwork will also be laid to plan and possibly start the building of a reliable sewage and filtration system, and the government will be encouraged to develop a long-term system for waste management. All of these measures will be planned to be as environmentally sustainable as possible.

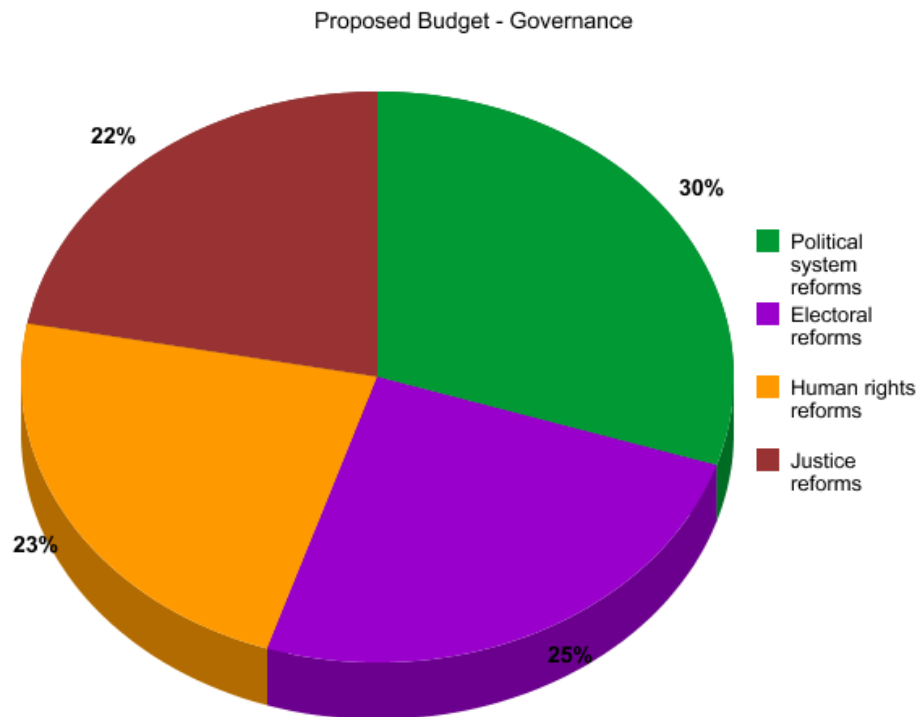
Safe water and sanitation facilities are also incentives for children, especially girls who have reached the age of menstruation, to attend school. By providing proper facilities, supplies, and information on hygiene for girls in school, attendance will increase. An increased school attendance in girls can foster a stronger status of women.

18% of this budget will fund **safe water and sanitation education programs**. The importance of using safe and reliable water sources and proper hygiene and sanitation practices will be emphasized. Example topics will include:

- Proper waste disposal: Not disposing of waste in water sources such as streams or rivers, proper use and maintenance of latrines.
- Only using known safe water sources, especially for cooking and drinking.
- Safe hygiene practices for girls who have reached the age of menstruation.
- The importance of proper hand washing and other hygiene practices.

With these education programs, spread of disease and other illness will decrease as a result of improved sanitation practices.

Governance



Decades of conflict in Afghanistan have resulted in an unstable government system that has left the country vulnerable to local power being held by extremist groups. As a result, democracy (all components of democracy, not only the right to vote) in the government has weakened, and political groups often do not adequately express the interests of the people. The use of international aid to support Afghanistan has also resulted in weak development of governance. The current government (both federal and local) must cooperate with international allies and adopt specific, result-oriented commitments for progress. Progress must be carefully planned and realistic; the government will be gradually weaned off of international assistance and resources. Political system (including corruption), electoral, human rights, and justice reforms need to be found and enacted in order to establish a self-sustaining, more democratic government.

The largest proportion (30%) of the proposed budget for governance will be assigned to **political system reforms**. Aside from being able to run the country, the government must also be able to provide security and promote economic growth. Corruption within the government - and in the National Assembly in particular - is a major concern. To develop and improve the political system, in-depth review and system restructuring must be done for the current political system to significantly reduce corruption and increase efficiency. Restructuring will include giving more legislative power to the National Assembly alongside measures to decrease corruption within this body; this is to establish the Assembly as an effective and assertive check for the executive body and the President. International assistance does need to continue in order to review and maintain progress.

25% of the proposed governance budget will go towards **electoral reforms**. A review of electoral laws must be made in order to establish reforms, particularly for the discouragement and prevention of election fraud. Initiatives must be sustainable in the long-term and efficient in maintaining democracy. According to the UN, these will include legal framework reforms and creating a single nationwide voter register.⁴⁸ The voting process must also become more transparent.

For **human rights reforms**, 23% of the budget will be assigned. Although significant progress has been made in respect to maintaining human rights and including them in the Afghan Constitution, influences from harmful traditions or extremist groups have hampered process (for example, the 2009 Shi'a Family Law). Poor security across the nation greatly contributes to human rights abuses, and international bodies and the Afghan government will have to address the issue of extremist groups to protect these rights. With the funding, media laws will be examined and amended to follow freedom of speech and information, human rights bodies within the government will gain an increased capacity (more workers, resources, etc.), and human rights monitors will be strengthened. Concerning women's rights, access to education must be improved, and other issues, such as underage marriages and domestic violence will be outlawed. The Afghan government must take an active role in the implementation and maintenance of these actions.

Justice reforms will receive 22% of this proposed governance budget. The judiciary and executive branches of government cannot be allowed to ignore human rights laws, and an effective check and accountability system must be put into place. Laws to discourage and persecute the use of "violence, torture, and arbitrary detention", actions to improve prison conditions, and increased public access to judiciary courts to pursue legal justice will be put into place.⁴⁹ A mediatory body will be put into place while reforms are being discussed to prevent bureaucratic disputes, and capacity and weak leadership will be addressed. Improving the state of the justice system will also discourage citizens from turning to the quicker Taliban-run justice, and decrease their informal powers.

⁴⁸ Canas, Vitalino. Governance Challenges in Afghanistan. Issue brief. *NATO Parliamentary Assembly*, 2010. Web. 27 May 2013. <<http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=2085>>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

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