

# VOICES OF AFGHAN YOUTH: Survey Findings and Key Priorities



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“The current situation of Afghan youth is at the height of **disappointment**, and the future is uncertain, especially for Afghan women.”

## Introduction

In November 2025, APT launched an online survey through its social media platforms and youth networks inside and outside Afghanistan to identify the key priorities of Afghan youth and gather their recommendations to the international community regarding support for their struggle to access fundamental rights. The survey is designed to inform APT and its Afghan Youth Representative to the UN Program in developing a youth-led, results-oriented process. This process aims to co-create an actionable framework capable of guiding advocacy, programming, and policy engagement efforts for Afghan youth globally.

## Background

Since 2021, Afghanistan has changed dramatically. Political power shifted, and with it came major losses of basic rights, especially for women and girls.

### 1. Humanitarian and Social Conditions

More than 5 million Afghans have been forced to return from neighboring countries, putting extreme pressure on housing, jobs, and services (UNHCR, 2026). Millions struggle with hunger, unemployment, and poverty. At the same time, international aid has decreased, even as needs continue to grow.

## 2. Women and Girls

Afghanistan is now the only country in the world where girls are banned from secondary school and university.

### Women also face:

- Limits on movement without a male guardian
- Severe restrictions on work,
- Fewer legal protections
- Threats, intimidation, and detention for speaking out

## Youth Priority Concerns

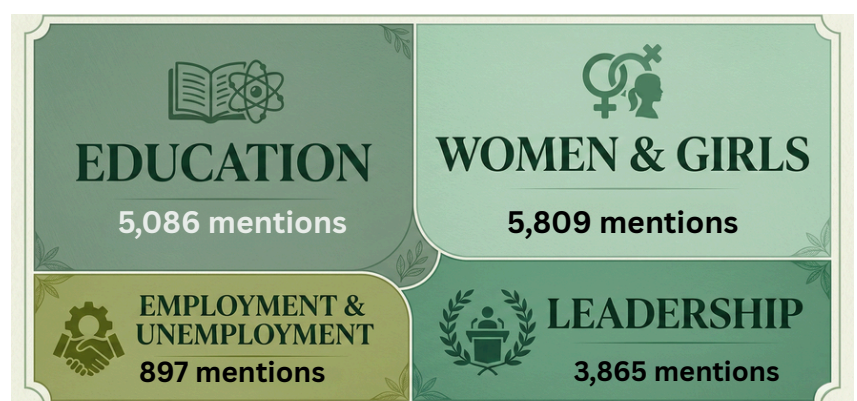


*Education and gender inclusion are the most urgent concerns for Afghan youth.*

A survey was conducted to identify the issues that Afghan youth consider most important. The survey was completed by 6,021 participants. Respondents were able to select multiple topics; therefore, mention counts reflect total selections rather than individual responses. All percentages are calculated based on the total number of participants.

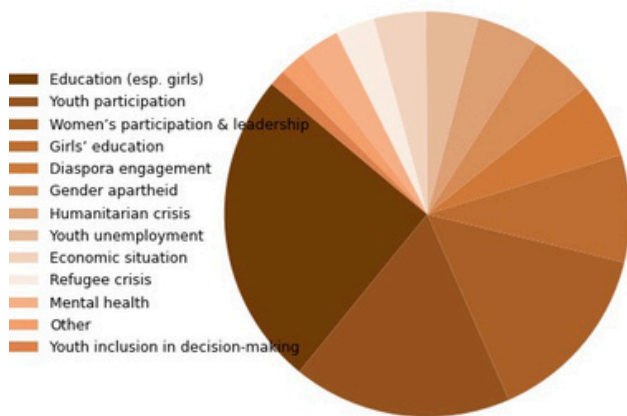
The survey results show that access to education is the primary concern for Afghan youth, particularly education for girls.

Beyond education, respondents emphasized the limited participation of young people and women in public and decision-making spaces. Youth participation (17.45%) and women's participation and leadership (14.58%) were frequently identified, suggesting that young people feel excluded from processes that shape their future and that women face structural barriers to leadership and civic engagement.

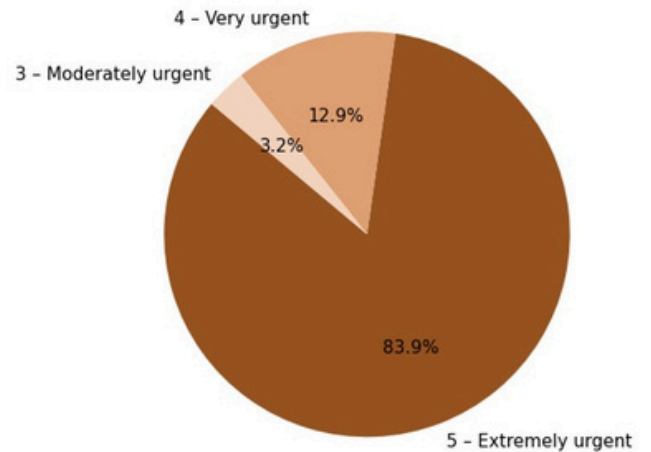


In addition to identifying key issues, respondents were asked to assess the urgency of these concerns. The findings indicate a strong sense of immediacy. Eighty-three point nine percent (83.9%) of respondents rated these issues as “extremely urgent,” and the average urgency score was 4.9 out of 5. This suggests that the challenges identified particularly education access and gender inclusion are not viewed as long-term or abstract problems, but as pressing issues requiring immediate attention.

**Youth Priority Concerns  
(Share of Mentions)**



**Perceived Urgency of Youth Concerns  
(1 = Not urgent, 5 = Extremely urgent)**



**My biggest dream is for Afghan youth to stand on their own feet with security, education, and real opportunities so they can shape their own future instead of surviving someone else's decisions.**

## Youth Voice, Anxiety, and Gender Solidarity

The survey results highlight three key factors that shape how Afghan youth view their future: limited opportunities to be heard, high levels of anxiety about the future, and strong support for gender equality among young men.

### 1. Youth Voice in National and International Discussions

Many young Afghans feel excluded from conversations that affect their future.

- 50% of respondents said their voice is not heard
- 31.6% said their voice is only sometimes heard
- Only 18.4% feel their voice is heard

### 2. Mental Health and Future Anxiety

Feelings of anxiety and hopelessness are common among Afghan youth.

- Over 60% reported feeling frequently anxious or hopeless
- Average anxiety score: 4.4 out of 5

Survey responses suggest that feelings of anxiety and hopelessness among Afghan youth are closely connected to restricted access to education and limited opportunities for the future.

Many young people described uncertainty about their lives due to school closures, barriers to learning, and the absence of clear pathways to employment or personal development.

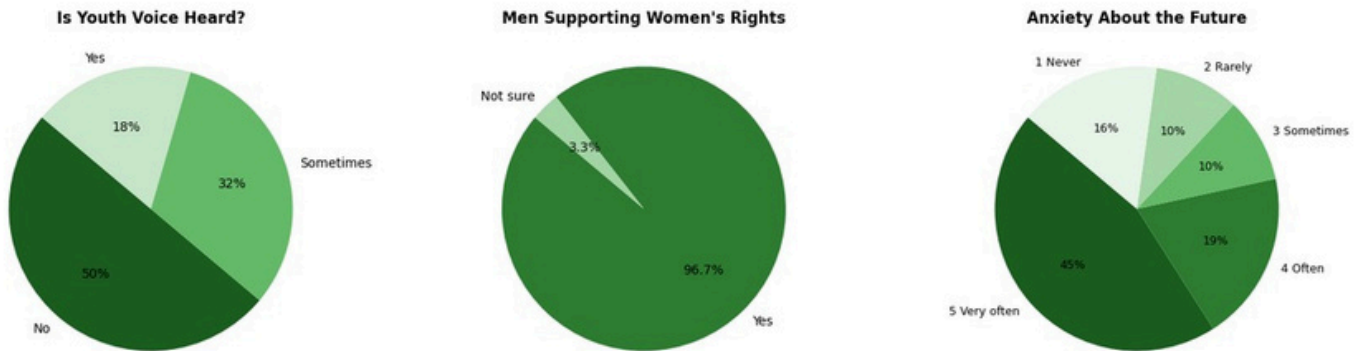
### 3. Gender Solidarity Among Young Men

Survey results indicate a high level of agreement among male respondents regarding support for women's rights and education.

96.7% of male participants stated that Afghan men should speak up for women’s rights and access to education, while only 3.3% expressed uncertainty.

These findings suggest that support for women’s rights is widely shared among young men and is commonly viewed as a collective responsibility rather than an individual or gender-specific issue.

### Youth Voice, Gender Solidarity, and Mental Wellbeing



## Summary

The survey findings show that young people in Afghanistan are being denied education, excluded from decision-making, and left with limited opportunities to shape their future, resulting in widespread anxiety and uncertainty. Girls and young women are disproportionately affected, as restrictions on education and participation continue to undermine their rights and potential.

At the same time, the strong support among young men for women’s rights demonstrates that Afghan youth are not passive victims, but a generation seeking inclusion, dignity, and equal opportunity. Ignoring these realities risks the long-term stability, development, and human capital of an entire country. Supporting Afghan youth—especially girls’ education, meaningful participation, and mental wellbeing is essential not only to protect fundamental human rights, but to prevent the loss of a generation whose potential matters to the region and the world.

I wish the world paid more attention to girls’ education and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Education is not just a right it’s a lifeline. When girls are denied the chance to study, an entire nation loses its future. Afghan girls have dreams, talent, and determination, but their voices are being silenced. I want the world to see that we are still here, still learning in every way we can, even when everything is against us. The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is worsening every day. People are still suffering from the damage of recent earthquakes, and many families have lost their homes and loved ones. On top of that, our country has faced attacks from a neighboring country that killed hundreds of innocent civilians including journalists and cricket players. Yet the world stays silent while Afghan people continue to suffer. We need the world to see our pain, to stand with us, and to help us rebuild our hope and humanity.

