

AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED Lesson Planpbs.org/independentlens/afghanistanunveiled***Afghanistan's Women: What Needs to Happen for Equality to be Achieved?*****Grade level:** 9–12**Estimated time:** Two 45-minute class periods**Introduction:**

Political representation, equality, education and autonomy are all important rights desired by the women of Afghanistan. In their post-Taliban society, especially in the larger cities, many Afghan women have these rights and celebrate the changes that have taken place. Unfortunately, much of the country struggles with more basic needs—obtaining food, water and shelter. In this lesson, students will view the film AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED and use several Web sites to explore women's issues in Afghanistan. During this exploration, they will begin to understand that changing laws is just a first step in securing a hopeful future for many of the women of Afghanistan.

Lesson objectives:

The students will:

- Compare and contrast the opportunities and obstacles for Afghan women in Kabul and outlying rural areas
- Describe several of the challenges that prevent women from taking advantage of the opportunities including lacking medical care, extreme poverty, cultural traditions, fear and intimidation
- Understand the significance of the addition of an equality clause to the Afghanistan constitution;
- Investigate the struggle of women in other developing countries and their progress

Materials needed:

- TV and VCR
- Computers with Internet Access
- AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED video

AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED Lesson Planpbs.org/independentlens/afghanistanunveiled***Afghanistan's Women: What Needs to Happen for Equality to be Achieved?*****Standards:****National Standards for History**<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/worldera9.html>

Standard 2: The search for community, stability and peace in an interdependent world.

2C. The student understands how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life.

- Analyze how feminist movements and social conditions have affected the lives of women in different parts of the world and compare women's progress toward social equality, economic opportunity, and political rights in various countries. [Draw comparisons across regions.]
- Assess the success of democratic reform movements in challenging authoritarian governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America. [Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.]

National Council of Teachers of English<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

Standard 7: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Standard 9: Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions and social roles.

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1. Discuss with students that they will be investigating Afghan women and how their world is changing. To guide the investigation, they will be watching segments of the film AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED that was created by Afghan women. Begin by looking at the biographies of the filmmakers at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/afghanistanunveiled/bios.html>. Ask your students to read the biographies and identify some elements that stand out to them about the people who created AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED. Students should mention that they are all women, most have lived in Kabul most of their lives and they are a youthful group. They wear headscarves in their photos. They are all studying journalism, and they have traveled to other areas of Afghanistan for this project many for the first time. Ask students if they find anything unusual about that list of facts. Students may say they see nothing unusual about a group of students producing a film about their country. Others may recognize the significance of young Afghan women being allowed to travel, study, speak freely and film other women.

2. Ask students to brainstorm a list of what women need to achieve in order to gain equality after so many years of extreme oppression. Discuss the elements students generated. Students will most likely identify voting rights, education, legal protections against harassment and similar elements. After watching the video segments, you will return to this list as a group and add any new concepts the film helps students identify.

3. From the biography page, click on the link for The Journey. Select "Follow the Journey" at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/afghanistanunveiled/detect.html>. Orient students to where Afghanistan is geographically, and explore each of the cities or villages included in the film.

4. Explain to students that they are going to watch two of the four segments of the film. In the first segment, the journalists travel to Bamiyan. As the filmmakers embark on their trip, they are unsure of what they will find. As they are watching the first segment of the video, ask students to explain who the Hazara are and why they are in such a terrible position. CUE the video to the beginning and PLAY until 10:48 when you hear the journalist say, "During recent years I was living with my own fears in Kabul, but I never imagined that the Taliban committed crimes like these." Ask students what difficulties Zinab and the Hazara face. How do they survive? Why do you think Zinab is so willing to share her life and the story of her people? You can see the journalists becoming visibly upset while filming Zinab. What do you think is going through their minds?

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Reflect back on the list of needs the class generated earlier. Is there anything they would like to add or change? They should begin to realize that before equality can be achieved, the basic needs of all people must be addressed.

5. FAST FORWARD to 14:24 where you see a woman walk through a door into a television studio. Explain to students that in this segment they will meet Shekeba Adill and travel with her to Herat, a very conservative province of Afghanistan. Shekeba speaks about her expectations for this journey. As students watch this segment, ask them to identify if the journey is what Shekeba expected. PLAY the tape and PAUSE at 19:00 when you hear Shekeba say, "It is very difficult for them." Ask students if Herat is what Shekeba expected. What did Shekeba's mother recommend she bring on the trip? What was her reaction? Why is Shekeba worried for women in this region?

Shekeba finally finds some people willing to speak with her on film. While watching the next segment, ask students to identify some additional ways women in Herat are struggling. PLAY the tape and STOP at 24:25 when you hear Shekeba saying, "The oppression that the Afghan people suffer seems to never end." What concerns for his patients does the doctor outline? Ask the class why it is so difficult for women to get medical care in Afghanistan. Shekeba finds one woman willing to talk with her about her struggles. What are her most significant concerns for herself and her family?

Reflect again on the list of needs generated at the beginning of the class. Again ask students to add more items or change what they have listed. Students again should begin to understand that basic human needs or food, shelter, safety and health care must be addressed before the more political elements of equality can be achieved.

6. Read the BBC article "Silence Over Afghan Women's Rights" at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3721932.stm. After students have read the article, discuss it with the class. What punishment is there in place for the men who abuse the women? What does it mean when the Minister of Women's Affairs says, "We have to change the law but education is also very, very important. It's fundamental." Who are the people that need to be educated?

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After watching the film and investigating various Web sites, students should have an understanding that the process of improving conditions for Afghan women, as well as all of the Afghan people, is a very complex one that has no easy solution. Since the removal of the Taliban, there has been great change in Afghanistan, although there is still much progress to be made. The assessment activity will provide students the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained as well as their ability to gain information from a variety of graphic sources. Explore the BBC's Web site Life in Afghanistan at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/afghanistan_elections/html/1.stm. On this site various categories are represented to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Afghanistan. Ask students to explore each of the sections of the site and respond to the following questions for each.

People:

What are the major ethnic groups?

What makes it difficult to determine populations with any accuracy?

Why has it been difficult for the Afghan people to develop a strong national identity?

Rural Life:

What percent of the rural population is considered impoverished?

How does that compare to rural households lead by women?

What are some of the issues contributing to poverty?

What areas have the highest rate of poverty?

City Life:

What are some of the greatest concerns for city dwellers?

Why is the population expected to grow so rapidly in the next few years?

What is the average wage for civil servants? Teachers? Unskilled workers? How does that wage compare to the cost of rent and food?

Health:

Investigate the rates for infant mortality, under five mortality and maternal mortality. Describe how Afghanistan compares to other less developed countries and to high income countries.

What is the cause of the huge differences in health?

Education:

How has school enrollment changed since 2001?

What area of education has seen the greatest change?

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How does Afghanistan's economy compare to other countries?
What difficulties are posed by the opium trade?

Government:

How does the structure of Afghanistan's government compare to the United States' governmental structure? What are the similarities and differences?

Extensions:

Use the BBC's Web site at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/south_asia/2004/afghanistan/default.stm to learn more about the future of Afghanistan.

Investigate women's organizations that provide aid to Afghan women. What organizations are involved and to what other areas of the world are they providing aid.

Compare the struggle of Afghan women to women in other struggling nations. One reference is the Web site Women, War and Peace at <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/>.

Online resources:

An extensive list of online resources is available in the Learn More section of the *Independent Lens* Web site for AFGHANISTAN UNVEILED at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/afghanistanunveiled/more.html>

About the author:

Traci Osterhagen-Brock is an educator in Portland, Oregon. She has taught English, language arts and global studies at the middle and high school levels. She was also a training specialist for the National Teacher Training Institute, helping teachers integrate technology and media into their instructional practices. Currently she is working as a freelance writer and trainer and supports teachers in creating applied learning projects. She earned a B.A. in English and an M.Ed. in secondary education from the University of Florida.