

# FIELD-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES



## U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

U.S. Diplomats chat with participants about LGBTI issues at an event at American Center on June 17, 2016.

[State Department Photo]

# U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION

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The State Department's public diplomacy efforts in South and Central Asia (SCA) are focused on strengthening democratic, inclusive and secure societies, improving access to accurate information and increasing educational and economic opportunity for citizens in the region. Countering violent extremism and disinformation and promoting increased regional connectivity are integral to all three goals. Public diplomacy efforts in SCA continue to prioritize multi-country exchange programs, alumni engagements, university partnerships and other initiatives that further cooperation among SCA countries on common regional and global challenges. To promote more inclusive societies, the bureau emphasizes the engagement of women, disenfranchised youth and other underserved or at-risk audiences wherever possible.

South and Central Asia are integral to the administration's Asia rebalance and the region has the potential to be a key driver of global prosperity over the coming decades. Demographically, it is home to almost a quarter of the world's population, including more than one-third of the global Muslim population. Over the coming decades, about 500 million people throughout South and Central Asia could enter the middle class. With over half of the population under the age of 25, the potential returns on its demographic dividend are staggering.

The region lies at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and the Middle East—spanning vital sea lanes to the south and burgeoning trade routes and energy flows to the north. It is also at the crossroads of key global economic and strategic trends. It comes as no surprise that economies in Asia have the potential in the coming decades to comprise as much as 50 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP). In order for the countries of South and Central Asia to realize their share, the region must grapple with challenges large and small, old and new.

While the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs is one of the smallest among the State Department's regional bureaus, the challenges in the area it oversees are among the largest of U.S. foreign policy priorities: how to best benefit from the acceleration of globalization; how to adjust to the relative rise of Asia; how to mitigate the impacts of global climate change; and how to deal with the emergence of authoritarian regional powers.

Democratic governance is far too fragile in a number of countries. Pervasive and corrosive corruption, a lack of economic opportunity, vulnerability to natural disasters and a host of other issues pose serious challenges to security and stability throughout the entire region. All of the countries in the region face collective challenges from building increased economic linkages with the broader Asian

economy to confronting threats from violent extremism and disinformation, terrorism and narco-trafficking. Most people in the region live in rural areas and many hundreds of millions are without electricity. No other region has as many poor and undernourished people as South Asia.

Low standards for the news media limit professional and fair journalism. No country in the region received a "free" media ranking in 2015 from Freedom House, although India, Nepal, Bangladesh and the Maldives are "partly free." However, in the 2016 Freedom House "Freedom of the Press Report," Bangladesh was cited for a notable decline due to the murders of four bloggers and a publisher by Islamist militants, threats and nonfatal attacks against other writers, continued legal harassment of media outlets and press freedom advocates, government-sanctioned economic pressure on certain outlets and attempts to censor social media. The 2016 report also cited Sri Lanka for notable improvement in press freedom due to a change in government that led to fewer physical threats against journalists, the easing of political pressure on private media and the unblocking of previously censored websites. In the 2016 report, all regional Central Asia countries are considered not free. Continuing this trend, the Freedom House 2015 "Freedom in the World" report cites Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as two of the "Worst of the Worst" 10 countries in the world. The PEW Global Indicators Database for 2015 shows a range of favorable opinion about the United States from 22 percent (Pakistan) to 70 percent (India) in South Asia. These are up from 2014 at 14 percent and 55 percent respectively. There is no PEW data from Central Asia.

## U.S. FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

The United States has six overarching foreign policy goals in South and Central Asia:

1. A strategic partnership with Afghanistan that protects U.S. national security and supports a more stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan;
2. A more stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan that plays a constructive role in the region;
3. A strengthened U.S.-India Strategic Partnership, leading to increased bilateral trade and better cooperation on shared regional and multilateral goals;
4. A greater regional economic cooperation in South and Central Asia that promotes greater prosperity and stability across the region, including creating a constituency for peace and economic progress in Afghanistan;

5. A more secure and stable region in South and Central Asia that advances U.S. interests; and
6. A South and Central Asia region with more democratic, accountable and inclusive governance and sustainable economic development.

### U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY GOALS

U.S. public diplomacy efforts directly support the above policy goals in South and Central Asia by strengthening democratic, inclusive and secure societies; improving access to accurate information; and increasing educational and economic opportunity for citizens in the region. Countering violent extremism and disinformation and promoting increased regional connectivity are integral to all three of these goals. There are eight regional public diplomacy priorities in 2015/2016:

1. Countering violent extremism throughout the region;
2. Promoting increased regional connectivity;
3. Countering the Russian narrative;
4. Inspiring entrepreneurship and innovation;
5. Increasing host-country action on climate change and the environment;
6. Strengthening educational partnerships and improving English language proficiency as tools for 21st century competitiveness;
7. Improving journalism standards and strengthening the digital literacy and strategic communications capacity of local partners; and
8. Ensuring audiences in the region have the appropriate tools to access accurate information.

Public Diplomacy (SCA/PPD) informs, guides and advances U.S. foreign policy objectives in the region through public diplomacy resources and expertise across all sectors. In 2015, Washington, D.C.-based public diplomacy desk officers were embedded into the bureau's regional offices. This has served to better integrate public diplomacy into policy decisions as they are shaped.

The region's 105 American Spaces are vital platforms for outreach throughout South and Central Asia. Cultural and sports exchanges and English language programs, such as the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access), increase access to information, encourage conflict resolution and reconciliation, and support workforce needs. Youth and educational exchanges such as the FLEX program, YES program, and Fulbright and Humphrey Fellowships are effective means to develop relationships with emerging leaders, as is the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). There are more than 76,000 alumni in the region from various U.S.-sponsored exchange programs. Pakistan has the largest cohort with more than 19,000 people in the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN).

### U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

In the region as a whole, according to the data available, U.S. public diplomacy spending in fiscal year 2015 was focused on Pakistan (\$49.671 million), Afghanistan (\$45.302 million), and India (\$9.389 million). Kazakhstan was the most-funded central Asian mission at \$3.365 million, followed by Kyrgyzstan (\$2.221 million), Tajikistan (\$1.895 million), Turkmenistan (\$1.863 million), and Uzbekistan (\$1.080 million).

The Bureau of South and Central Asia Office of Press and



On 21st July 2016, three universities from Bangladesh who participated at the 2016 University Rover Challenge in the USA showcased their rovers at the American Embassy. [State Department Photo]

# SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA: BASE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

Diplomatic & Consular Programs Budget, .7 Funding

Highest Funding



Low Funding

POSITION	COUNTRY	“.7” SPEND	% of Region
1	INDIA	\$7,974,716	32.75%
2	KAZAKHSTAN	\$2,889,127	11.86%
3	AFGHANISTAN	\$2,263,836	9.30%
4	PAKISTAN	\$2,066,644	8.49%
5	BANGLADESH	\$1,878,464	7.71%
6	SRI LANKA	\$1,762,009	7.24%
7	NEPAL	\$1,495,930	6.14%
8	KYRGYZSTAN	\$1,381,852	5.67%
9	TAJIKISTAN	\$988,312	4.06%
10	TURKMENISTAN	\$953,170	3.91%
11	UZBEKISTAN	\$697,448	2.86%

## 2015 BASE BUDGET



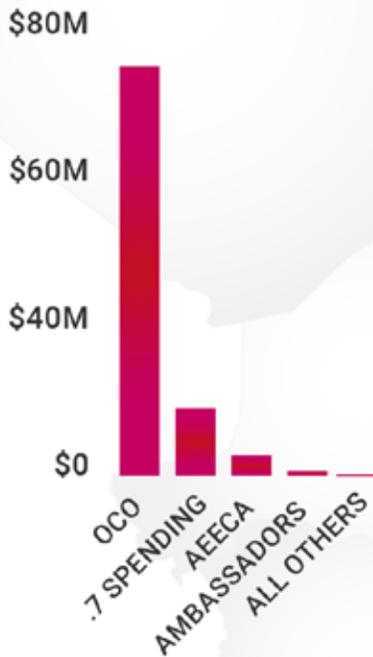
# SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA: TOTAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

Diplomatic & Consular Programs Budget + All Reported Supplemental Funding Routed Through Public Affairs Sections

**Highest Funding**

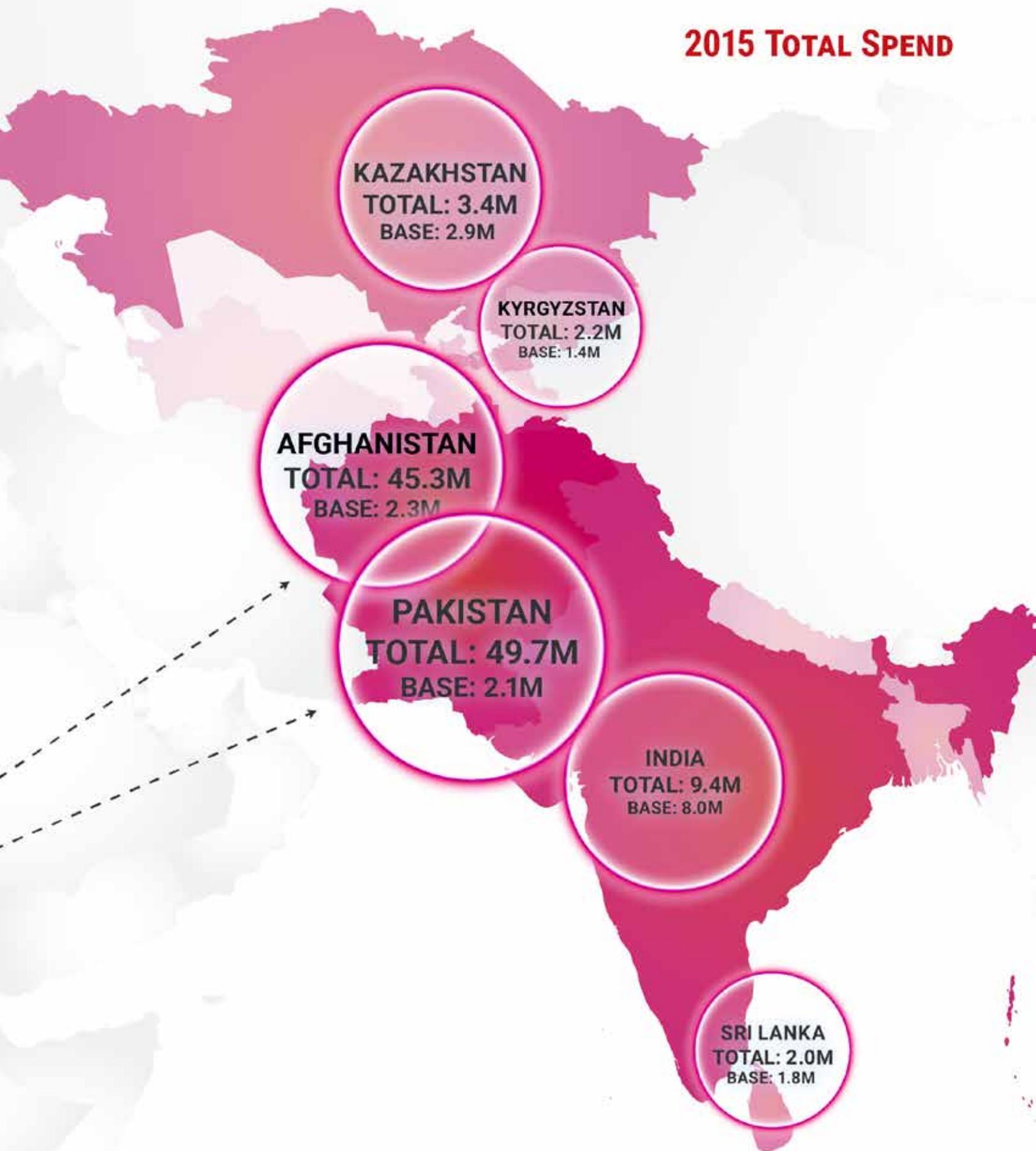
POSITION	BASE	COUNTRY	TOTAL SPEND	% of Region
1	4	PAKISTAN	\$49,671,411	41.19%
2	3	AFGHANISTAN	\$45,302,712	37.57%
3	1	INDIA	\$9,389,245	7.79%
4	2	KAZAKHSTAN	\$3,365,259	2.79%
5	8	KYRGYZSTAN	\$2,221,363	1.84%
6	6	SRI LANKA	\$2,025,308	1.68%
7	5	BANGLADESH	\$1,939,534	1.61%
8	9	TAJIKISTAN	\$1,895,036	1.57%
9	7	NEPAL	\$1,863,433	1.55%
10	10	TURKMENISTAN	\$1,834,461	1.52%
11	11	UZBEKISTAN	\$1,080,478	0.90%

**Low Funding**



LARGE DISPARITY

## 2015 TOTAL SPEND



# SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA REGION PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DETAILED SPENDING

	FY 2013		FY 2014		FY 2015	
	D&CP	All Sources*	D&CP	All Sources*	D&CP	All Sources*
<b>Total Funding</b>	\$20,327,893	\$195,656,797	\$24,429,868	\$120,519,369	\$24,351,509	\$120,588,241
<b>Average Funding</b>	\$1,847,990	\$16,249,733	\$2,220,897	\$10,043,280	\$2,213,774	\$10,962,567
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	\$1,666,125	\$22,057,186	\$2,196,099	\$17,752,769	\$2,014,516	\$18,224,997

## REGIONAL COUNTRY SPENDING RANKED BY FY 15 TOTAL SPENDING

Country Name	FY 2013 Actual		FY14 Actual		FY15 Actual		
	D&CP	All Sources*	D&CP	All Sources*	D&CP	All Sources*	
1 PAKISTAN	\$2,452,214	\$58,504,329	\$2,182,889	\$36,561,172	\$2,066,644	\$49,671,411	↓
2 AFGHANISTAN	\$2,210,396	\$63,834,454	\$3,592,000	\$56,507,034	\$2,263,836	\$45,302,712	↓
3 INDIA	\$6,573,157	\$27,623,198	\$8,398,867	\$10,195,170	\$7,974,716	\$9,389,245	↓
4 KAZAKHSTAN	\$1,728,773	\$8,267,234	\$1,956,091	\$3,964,445	\$2,889,127	\$3,365,259	↑
5 KYRGYZSTAN	\$1,343,828	\$6,458,655	\$1,367,644	\$2,421,388	\$1,381,852	\$2,221,363	↑
6 SRI LANKA	\$906,556	\$4,148,613	\$885,370	\$928,094	\$1,762,009	\$2,025,308	↑
7 BANGLADESH	\$1,300,108	\$7,151,148	\$1,635,207	\$2,011,284	\$1,878,464	\$1,939,534	↑
8 TAJIKISTAN	\$1,053,396	\$6,285,664	\$1,315,563	\$2,644,280	\$988,312	\$1,895,036	↓
9 NEPAL	\$1,336,052	\$5,924,257	\$1,375,089	\$1,744,895	\$1,495,930	\$1,863,433	↑
10 TURKMENISTAN	\$764,074	\$3,657,128	\$958,089	\$2,361,743	\$953,170	\$1,834,461	↓
11 UZBEKISTAN	\$659,339	\$3,535,949	\$763,059	\$1,171,380	\$697,448	\$1,080,478	↓
12 MALDIVES		\$266,167		\$8,484		N/A	

*\*Total funding from all reported sources. Due to lag in reporting of some funding types, FY14 and FY15 data may not reflect all additional funding sources. For example, ECE funding data reporting generally lags 2 fiscal years behind. Arrows indicate change in D&CP funding.*

## SAMPLE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PROGRAMS

Programs that are helping to achieve the bureau's public diplomacy priorities are categorized below by theme.

### STRENGTHENED DEMOCRATIC, INCLUSIVE, AND SECURE SOCIETIES

**Nepal:** The embassy in Kathmandu's disability outreach programs sought to add value in the ongoing discourse on inclusion and equality in the context of Nepal's new constitution, which was promulgated in September 2015. In December 2014, in partnership with disABILITY Media Foundation, the U.S. embassy in Nepal hosted an interactive disability rights workshop. Diverse leaders from government and civil society attended the program to examine laws and policies related to disabled and elderly access to public and private venues. The participants, including members of the Constituent Assembly, ministry officials, heads of private organizations, hospitality representatives, activists and journalists, made firm commitments to advance disability rights and promote accessibility across Nepal. Nepali-American engineer Ananta R. Baidya facilitated the program and formed a monitoring group composed of a cross-section of participants to assess post-workshop progress and convene a similar program after six months. That follow-on program marked the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Public Affairs Section (PAS) screened an IIP documentary, "The Great Fight: Disability Rights Movement in the United States," after which more than 90 people, including leaders of disability right movements, journalists and civil society members, engaged in a healthy discussion on promoting disability rights in Nepal.

**India:** The Public Affairs Section at Consulate General Mumbai has leveraged its unique position in the epicenter of the Hindi film industry to create public affairs programming related to women's empowerment and combating gender-based violence. In December 2015, the consulate held a crowdsourced short film contest and film festival in support of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence global campaign. After publicizing the contest through social media, the consulate received over 40 submissions including short documentaries and fictional films made by Indian film students and filmmakers. They screened the top eight submissions, which focused on topics as broad as domestic violence, cat-calling and child marriage, at an event on the consulate lawn with over 300 guests in attendance. This program tied together the creative industry, students and civil society to leverage cultural outreach on a major social issue, which continues to be an area of concern in Indian society following several infamous cases of sexual violence.

**Kyrgyz Republic:** Mission Bishkek has developed a multi-tiered approach to countering violent extremism through programs that prevent and interdict radicalization. Their efforts have allowed the embassy to forge a close working relationship with the Director of the State Commission for Religious Affairs and the Grand Mufti, which regulate religion in the Kyrgyz Republic. The embassy has supported the visits by renowned Syrian-American Imam Mohamad Bashar Arafat to strengthen ties and promote tolerance and cooperation among people of diverse economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds through engagement with Central Asian spiritual leaders, community leaders and civil society in regions most at risk for extremist recruiting. PAS Bishkek is also working directly with madrassas to train imams in English language instruction, mediation and negotiation, human rights, rule of law and how to counteract factors conducive to the spread of violent extremism. Through a Democracy Commission grant the embassy is working directly with madrasah students to improve their career outcomes by bridging the qualifications gap for madrasah graduates through vocational education.

### IMPROVED ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION

**Afghanistan:** In support of media outreach and advancing Afghanistan's communications capacity, the Public Affairs Section in Kabul supported a program to provide media communications training for more than 100 women community leaders from 34 provinces in Afghanistan. The training program helped strengthen the communication skills and capacity of these participants to better engage and more effectively communicate with the media and their constituents. The participants learned how to successfully use the media to produce and disseminate timely and accurate multi-media information to national and international audiences, thereby increasing their effectiveness as advocates for policies and strengthening their rapport with constituents, the general public and decision-makers. The program also strengthened the capacity of the participants to establish good relations with local media to help sustain a media environment that is supportive of women leaders and advocates.

**Turkmenistan:** In Turkmenistan, the embassy in Ashgabat welcomes approximately 140,000 eager visitors per year to its four American Spaces, with the American Center in Ashgabat positioning itself among the top 10 most heavily trafficked, U.S. government-owned spaces in the world. The American Center provides Turkmen citizens with the only free, uncensored internet access available in the country, as well as free educational resources, such as university test preparation materials, English language classes and professional development seminars. By strategically and deliberately delivering policy-rich and capacity-building programs, PAS Ashgabat actively

works to counter Turkmenistan's destructive education policies that have severely handicapped its human capacity growth. American Spaces programming assists in reversing the dramatic decline and represents the embassy's only unfettered opportunity to reach people directly with democratic messages, educational counseling and policy, informational and cultural programming, which is directly in line with department foreign policy messaging and the mission's strategic goals.

#### **INCREASED EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

**Uzbekistan:** In support of two presidential decrees encouraging foreign language education in Uzbekistan, the mission in Tashkent has provided targeted ECA and post-funded programming to improve all levels of the country's education system. In fiscal years 2014–2015, a State Department-sponsored English language specialist directed the work of 10 Uzbek teachers who wrote two volumes—"Becoming a Teacher" and "Being a Teacher"—on language teaching methodology. It is envisioned that these books will be used by "thousands of pre-service and in-service teachers per year at the 18 state-funded teacher training universities all over Uzbekistan." Through a fiscal year 2015 English Language Innovation grant, the embassy is supporting a nation-wide re-training program that will reach 15,000 teachers in 600 secondary schools. Also, the first year-long English language specialist at the University of World Languages produced a model textbook, named "B2 Ready," with 30 teachers from throughout the country.

Additionally, PAS Tashkent and ECA have provided direct English language instruction in secondary schools and universities through the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access) and English Language Fellow Program.

**Bangladesh:** The embassy in Dhaka's Edward M. Kennedy Center for Public Service and the Arts (EMK Center) launched a Maker Space to amplify the EMK Center's core programs through the use of cutting-edge technology and digital innovation. The Makerspace convenes entrepreneurs, engineers, computer scientists, audio and visual artists to innovate and problem solve. Through funding from the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP), the Makerspace is outfitted with a 3D printing machine, audio/video production software, computer animation tools, robotics equipment and a music-production studio. More than 50 young professionals from across Bangladesh participated in an embassy-led three-day workshop to learn how to use this technology for social good. Several renowned local and international trainers led sessions on how to maximize low- and no-cost technologies to solve complex issues. Embracing experiential learning, Makerspace workshop participants will begin meeting monthly to collaborate and explore different themes through self-led and class-guided digital experimentation. The EMK Center Makerspace supports the mission in Dhaka's goal of promoting sustainable and broadly shared economic prosperity for Bangladesh. The Makerspace also enhances STEM skills for college students in Bangladesh, making them more employable and capable of contributing to the country's success.

# U.S. INTERNATIONAL MEDIA IN THE SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION

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## RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY (RFE/RL)

Languages: Dari, Pashto, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek

### RFE/RL RADIO AZADI (LANGUAGES: PASHTO, DARI)

FY 2015: \$5.190 million (\$6.508 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** Dari 1985–1993, resumed 2002–present; Pashto 1987–1993, resumed 2002–present

**Delivery Method:** Radio (FM, MW, SW, satellite), TV, Website and Mobile Site, Social Media, Mobile Apps

**Radio Original Programming:** 71 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcast:** 84 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** 1.15 hours/week

**Television Total Broadcast:** 1.15 hours/week

As a surrogate national public broadcaster that reaches 44 percent of Afghan adults each week (according to BBG research), RFE/RL's Afghan Service provides in-depth coverage of local issues and events affecting people's daily lives. While most local media are owned by powerful individuals or interest groups, the Afghan Service has become a symbol of fair and objective journalism in Afghanistan. The service's programming includes call-in shows on topics such as current affairs, health and other socioeconomic issues in which listeners participate directly and ask questions from authorities and analysts. It carries 27 regularly scheduled feature programs, each between 10-to-15 minutes, on various subjects such as women's empowerment, youth, culture, political satire and family matters. "Colors of Life" profiles the uncommon lives of ordinary people, while "In Search of Loved Ones" helps reunite families separated by war and dislocation. A weekly 45-minute show "New Thoughts" is focused on youth, their activities in society and their participation in the political and democratic process. The service also produces a weekday regional news round-up of 3-to-4 minutes in Dari and Pashto for Ariana TV. Internet access and use of new media is growing among younger Afghans. To engage these younger audiences, the service produces extensive multimedia content on its website and on social media. Additionally, the service collaborates with local mobile companies to provide subscribers SMS news alerts throughout the day.

### RFE/RL RADIO MASHAAL (LANGUAGE: PASHTO)

FY 2015: \$3.190 million (\$3.839 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 2010

**Delivery Method:** Radio (AM/SW), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media, Mobile App

**Radio Original Programming:** 56.5 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcast:** 63 hours/week

Radio Mashaal provides news and local coverage as an alternative to extremist propaganda in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and along its border with Afghanistan. Because radio is still the primary source of information in FATA, Mashaal successfully challenges extremist propaganda by holding live roundtable debates, organizing interactive call-in shows and producing special features without fear or intimidation. In-depth political reporting features local policy-makers and tribal elders, including well-known moderate Pashtun personalities who reject violence and extremism. Mashaal also provides a free platform for citizen engagement to the people of the area. Mashaal targets programming toward youths, local elders and religious leaders with reports on tolerance, security and the development of their communities. Mashaal is also engaging youth with a robust digital strategy, which has led to strong engagement on the service's social media platforms. Listeners also engage with Mashaal through Skype, Twitter and three toll-free numbers during live call-in shows.

### RFE/RL RADIO AZATTYK (LANGUAGE: KYRGYZ)

FY 2015: \$1.710 million (\$1.710 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1953

**Delivery Method:** Radio (nationwide FM, satellite), TV (affiliates), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media, Apps

**Radio Original Programming:** 26.3 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcast:** 49 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** 2 hour/week

**Television Total Broadcast:** 2 hour/week

The Kyrgyz Service connects Kyrgyzstani society with informed reporting and debate on topics ignored or collectively neglected in Kyrgyzstan, such as interethnic tolerance, minority rights, abuse and torture within the justice system, Islamic radicalism and corruption in the government. In light of the dominance of Russian media in the country promoting the Kremlin's version of domestic and foreign policy, as well as the rising influence of radical Islam in society, the Kyrgyz Service has retained its position of being a trustworthy, balanced, in-depth journalistic organization providing audiences with unbiased and factual reporting in the face of misinformation. Sample programs

include: “Inconvenient Questions,” a political talk show which was rated the third most popular TV program in Kyrgyzstan in a January 2015 study by Global Media; and the youth-oriented program discussing the rights of different social groups and minorities “Azattyk+,” which explores ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, tolerance and openness to other countries and cultures, and achievements and problems of young people in Kyrgyzstan and abroad.

### **RFE/RL RADIO OZODI (LANGUAGE: TAJIK)**

**FY 2015:** \$1.603 million (\$1.693 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1953

**Delivery Method:** Radio (SW, satellite), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media, Mobile Apps

**Radio Original Programming:** 22.75 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcast:** 63 hours/week

RFE/RL’s Tajik Service provides professional news and information in a largely government-controlled media environment. The service’s main advantage is access to important sources of information, it also has the courage to openly raise sensitive and relevant issues. As such, the Tajik Service plays an important role as a surrogate broadcaster in the country. In the last year, new technical capabilities and activity on a variety of platforms, especially multimedia, have consolidated its position in the local market. Monthly visits to the website have topped 1.3 million during the first quarter of 2016, despite the fact that the website has been blocked by the Tajik government since September 2015. Google Hangouts, Skype, Facebook, MoiMir (a Russian social networking site) and other new media tools also allow access to Ozodi’s radio programs. The service interviews political and civil society leaders and connects them with ordinary citizens. The service’s extensive coverage on human rights abuses, torture and other civil rights violations is frequently quoted by international organizations. Sample programs include: the 30-minute “News Journal,” which is focused on daily events including domestic, international and regional news and features; a youth program called “Oyandasoz;” and “Voice of Migrants,” which covers the human rights concerns of the million Tajik citizens living and working in Russia.

### **RFE/RL RADIO AZATTYQ (LANGUAGE: KAZAKH)**

**FY 2015:** \$1.552 million (\$1.552 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1953

**Delivery Method:** Website and Mobile Site, Social Media, TV, Mobile App

**Television Original Programming:** 0.42 hours (25 minutes)/week

**Television Total Broadcast:** 0.42 hours (25 minutes)/week

The Kazakh Service reports on compelling stories that

would receive little or no coverage from local media and provides a platform for audiences in Kazakhstan to engage and share ideas. Targeting young, urban professionals, college students and journalists, the service delivers multimedia content digitally via its Kazakh- and Russian-language websites, mobile platforms and social media. The service seeks to set the information agenda, offering objective news and perspectives in both Kazakh and Russian. It also aims to promote civic activism that brings real change into the lives of its audience. The service puts special emphasis on visual aspects and audience interaction. Each weekday, the service’s TV affiliates air a 5-minute newscast on world events in Kazakh prepared by the service. The weekly video program “Free Talk,” which features two guests with different positions on the key topic of the week, has also been aired by a regional affiliate since July 2015.

### **RFE/RL RADIO OZODLIK (LANGUAGE: UZBEK)**

**FY 2015:** \$1.490 million (\$1.516 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1953

**Delivery Method:** Radio (SW and satellite), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media, Mobile App

**Radio Original Programming:** 19.5 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcast:** 52.3 hours/week

RFE/RL’s Uzbek Service is the only Uzbek-language surrogate broadcaster and is well-known as a trustworthy source of information in Uzbekistan. The service is a leader in the country among international broadcasters thanks to its wide network of contacts and sources in Uzbekistan, a professional reporting team in Prague, and its dedication to the mission and strategic focus on innovation and new media. In contrast to domestic media, Ozodlik provides uncensored news and analysis that challenges the government’s policies, creates an atmosphere of open debate and provides an accurate account of world affairs. Programs feature the most important domestic news reports, regional and world stories, interviews and special programs ranging from culture to politics to the economy, in addition to the daily “Open Microphone” program, which airs listeners’ opinions. Ozodlik is also a leader in engaging with audiences via mobile. Ozodlik’s mobile apps, as well as use of WhatsApp and Telegram, provide interaction with listeners, allow for submission of user-generated content, and allow the outlet to generate additional content.

# VOICE OF AMERICA (VOA)

Languages: Bangla, Dari, Pashto, Uzbek

## VOA AFGHAN SERVICE (DARI AND PASHTO)

FY 2015: \$4.975 million (\$5.974 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** Dari–1980; Pashto–1982

**Delivery Method:** Radio (SW, MW, FM), Television, Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

**Radio Original Programming:** 46.5 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcasting:** 58 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** 6.5 hours/week

**Television Total Broadcasting:** 6.5 hours/week

The service has 6 million regular listeners and viewers within Afghanistan, but targets Dari and Pashto populations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the diaspora in the Middle East and Europe. It is one of the leading sources of daily news and information for Dari- and Pashto-speaking audiences. Its program topics include health, science, entertainment, sports and women's rights. VOA Afghan is one of the country's leading content providers on social media. With media freedoms uncertain in Afghanistan, VOA aims to provide consistent, professional local and international news to inform Afghans on the pace of reform and reconstruction efforts, women's and youth issues, business, agriculture, technology, health, education, security, human rights and Western culture. Sample programs include: "TV Ashna," which features interviews with Afghan and American policy makers, news, features and reports from Afghanistan and other cities worldwide; "Karwan," a weekly science and technology TV magazine; "Radio Ashna," which provides original news reports from Afghanistan, world news round-ups, business and economic features, and topics of interest to Afghan women and youth; and "NojibaNoshaba," a weekly radio call-in program produced by women, for women and about women.

## VOA URDU SERVICE

FY 2015: \$3.154 million (\$4.293 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1951

**Delivery Method:** Radio (MW, FM), Television, Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

**Radio Original Programming:** 42 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcasting:** 91 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** 2.5 hours/week

**Television Total Broadcasting:** 2.5 hours/week

Targeting audiences within Pakistan, the Urdu-speaking population in India, and the Pakistani diaspora in the Middle East and Europe, VOA Urdu reaches 5.3 percent of the audience in Pakistan, according to a June 2014 survey. Its programming on Aaj News and HUM TV reaches

an elite Pakistani audience and provides news on current events, health, education and politics and roundtable discussions on issues like U.S.-Pakistan relations. Sample programs include: "Kahani Pakistani," a flagship, twice-weekly show that features stories on life in America, the Pakistani diaspora, U.S. election systems, health care and related subjects; "Café DC," which features interviews with Washington leaders on their daily lives and career experiences; the weekly "Independence Avenue" program, which features current affairs and discussions on important events of the week; and "Zindagi 360," an entertainment and lifestyle program aimed at teens and young adults in Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora.

## VOA RADIO DEEWA (PASHTO)

FY 2015: \$2.732 million (\$3.752 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 2006

**Delivery Method:** Radio (MW, SW, Satellite); Television; Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

**Radio Original Programming:** 63 hours/week

**Total Radio Broadcasting:** 168 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** 14 hours/week

**Total Television Broadcasting:** 14 hours/week

VOA Deewa ("Light" in Pashto) provides news and information to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region, where more than 60 million Pashto-speaking Pakistanis and Afghans live. VOA Deewa's weekly reach in the target region is around 20 percent, higher than any local or international broadcast. The target region lacks local independent sources of information on regional, international and U.S. politics. Military narrative, jihadi agenda and extremist groups' propaganda are dominant in the local state and private media market. VOA Deewa reaches out to this critical region and audience via latest media tools such as digital platforms, direct-to-home satellite, internet and radio. The emergence of Daesh and the presence of Al Qaida and the Taliban in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan are major foreign policy concerns for the United States. The sanctuaries of the terrorist organizations in the target region pose a huge threat to U.S. interests across the world and stability in Afghanistan and India. Sample programs include: "Bibi Shereena," a daily women's radio on TV show, and VOA Deewa's flagship program, which features women's struggles in conservative Pakistani and Afghan societies; "Pashtun Connection," a weekly TV magazine profiling top issues of the week with U.S. perspective on regional developments; "Bazaar," a weekly show engaging economists, agriculturalists and merchants on latest market trends and farming fashions; and health program that is considered a health clinic in the region.

## VOA BANGLA SERVICE

FY 2015: \$1.185 million (\$1.225 million with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1958

**Delivery Method:** Radio (MW, FM Affiliates), Television (Affiliate), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

**Radio Original Programming:** 8.1 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcasting:** 8.1 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** .25 hour (15 minutes)/week

**Television Total Broadcasting:** .25 hour (15 minutes)/week

VOA's Bangla Service provides news and information on radio, television and the internet and reaches 14 million listeners weekly, according to a January 2015 survey. VOA's main broadcasts reach Bangladesh and the Bangla-speaking Indian states of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, as well as several Arab and Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia where Bangladeshi workers live. Sample programs include: "Hello America," which provides analysis of major social and political issues in the United States, Bangladesh, South Asia and the world; "Straight from America," a weekly video magazine program; and "VOA 60 News," a four times per week video feature on U.S. politics and news. USAID-funded health program include two weekly TV shows on NTV ("Health Digest") and DESH-TV ("Story of Life") and weekly FM radio feature on health ("Better Health, Better Life"), all of which are produced locally in Dhaka with editorial control by VOA Bangla Washington. It also includes a quarterly training and workshop for journalists in different cities of Bangladesh conducted by VOA Bangla staffers, USAID officials and health experts.

## VOA UZBEK SERVICE

FY 2015: \$669,000 (\$669,000 with program delivery)

**Origin:** 1972

**Delivery Method:** Radio (Affiliates in Kyrgyzstan and Northern Afghanistan), Television, Website and Mobile

Site, Social Media

**Radio Original Programming:** 3.5 hours/week

**Radio Total Broadcasting:** 7 hours/week

**Television Original Programming:** 30 minutes /week

**Television Total Broadcasting:** 4.5 hours/week

Targeting audiences in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and ethnic Uzbek populations in Afghanistan and China, VOA Uzbek aims to provide professional news on political, economic and social issues in an area where access to free media is limited. It also aims to provide a platform for reconciliation among Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik communities in the region and frequently produces special programs on issues relevant to ethnic Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan and western China. One program, "Exploring America," covers U.S. foreign policy, U.S. relations with Uzbekistan and the rest of Central Asia, and segments on American life, education and culture. A second TV program "America Ovozi" is a daily news brief looking at the latest global development with headline news.

# COUNTRY PROFILES

## SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION COUNTRY BY COUNTRY PROFILES

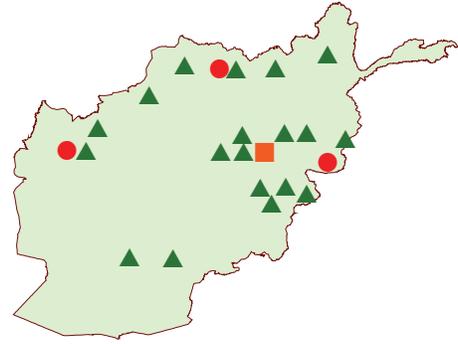
# Afghanistan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: **652,860 sq. km.**  
 Population: **31,627,506 (2014)**  
 Below 24 yrs. old: **66%**  
 Refugee population: **280,267**  
 Urban population: **26.7%**  
 GDP/capita: **\$590**  
 Unemployment: **8.2%**  
 Below poverty line: **35.8%**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**  
 Internet users/100 people: **6 (2014)**  
 Mobile phones/100 people: **75 (2014)**  
 Literacy: **32%**  
 Avg. years of education: Females: **8 (2011)**  
 Males: **12 (2011)**



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: **\$2,210,396** FY14 Actual: **\$3,592,000** FY15 Actual: **\$2,263,836**  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: **\$63,834,454** FY14 Actual: **\$56,507,034** FY15 Actual: **\$45,302,712**

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme

### Top Spending by Activity

Not Available

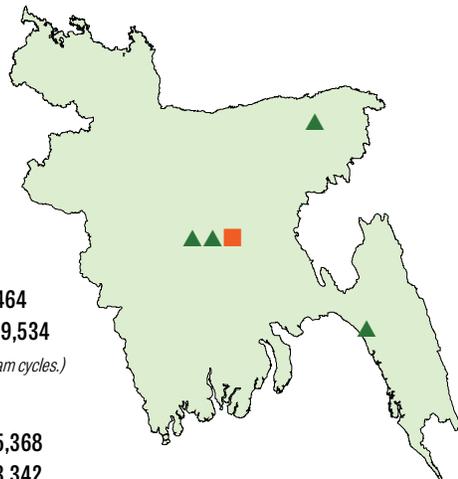
# Bangladesh

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: **130,170 sq. km.**  
 Population: **159,077,513 (2014)**  
 Below 24 yrs. old: **50%**  
 Refugee population: **32,472**  
 Urban population: **34.3%**  
 GDP/capita: **\$1,212**  
 Unemployment: **4.5%**  
 Below poverty line: **31.5%**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**  
 Internet users/100 people: **10 (2014)**  
 Mobile phones/100 people: **80 (2014)**  
 Literacy: **60%**  
 Avg. years of education: Females: **10 (2011)**  
 Males: **10 (2011)**



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

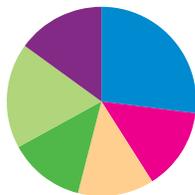
**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: **\$1,300,108** FY14 Actual: **\$1,635,207** FY15 Actual: **\$1,878,464**  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: **\$7,151,148** FY14 Actual: **\$2,011,284** FY15 Actual: **\$1,939,534**

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme

### Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	<b>\$765,368</b>
Other	<b>\$413,342</b>
American Centers	<b>\$263,039</b>
Media/Press Activities	<b>\$108,677</b>
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	<b>\$97,760</b>



### Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
- Education
- Economics
- Science
- Military
- CVE
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

### Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

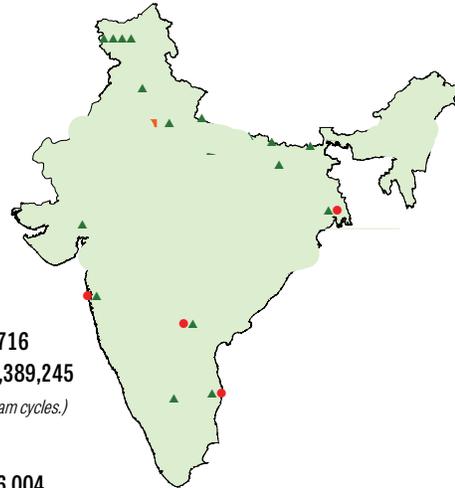
# India

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: **2,973,190 sq. km.**  
 Population: **1,295,291,543 (2014)**  
 Below 24 yrs. old: **48%**  
 Refugee population: **199,937**  
 Urban population: **32.7%**  
 GDP/capita: **\$1,582**  
 Unemployment: **4.9%**  
 Below poverty line: **21.9%**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

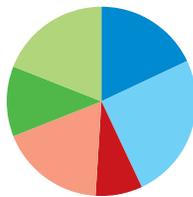
FH Media Freedom: **Partly Free**  
 Internet users/100 people: **18 (2014)**  
 Mobile phones/100 people: **74 (2014)**  
 Literacy: **69%**  
 Avg. years of education: Females: **12 (2013)**  
 Males: **11 (2013)**



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: **\$6,573,157** FY14 Actual: **\$8,398,867** FY15 Actual: **\$7,974,716**  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: **\$27,623,198** FY14 Actual: **\$10,195,170** FY15 Actual: **\$9,389,245**  
*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$4,736,004
Support for Information Resource Centers	\$550,924
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$547,177
Books & Publications	\$282,116
Media/Press Activities	\$253,786

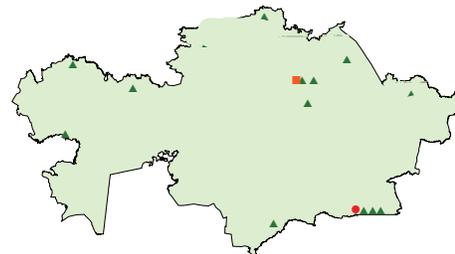
# Kazakhstan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: **2,699,700 sq. km.**  
 Population: **17,289,111 (2014)**  
 Below 24 yrs. old: **42%**  
 Refugee population: **633**  
 Urban population: **53.2%**  
 GDP/capita: **\$10,508**  
 Unemployment: **5.1%**  
 Below poverty line: **2.8%**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

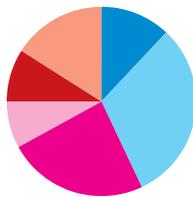
FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**  
 Internet users/100 people: **55 (2014)**  
 Mobile phones/100 people: **172 (2014)**  
 Literacy: **100%**  
 Avg. years of education: Females: **15 (2015)**  
 Males: **15 (2015)**



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: **\$1,728,773** FY14 Actual: **\$1,956,091** FY15 Actual: **\$2,889,127**  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: **\$8,267,234** FY14 Actual: **\$3,964,445** FY15 Actual: **\$3,365,259**  
*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$650,105
Other	\$471,254
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$441,537
Media/Press Activities	\$356,557
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	\$206,700

### Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
- Education
- Economics
- Science
- Military
- CVE
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

### Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

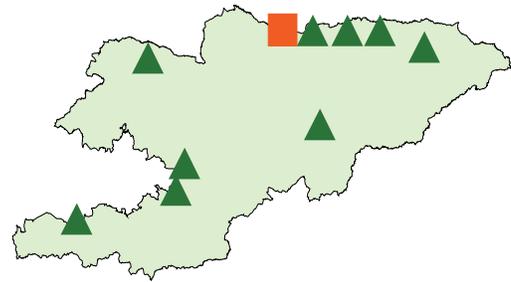
# Kyrgyzstan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 191,800 sq. km.  
 Population: 5,834,200 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 50%  
 Refugee population: 482  
 Urban population: 35.7%  
 GDP/capita: \$1,103  
 Unemployment: 8.3%  
 Below poverty line: 30.6%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 28 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 134 (2014)  
 Literacy: 99%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 13 (2013)  
 Males: 12 (2013)

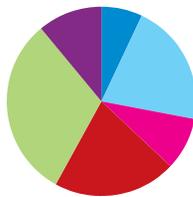


## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$1,343,828 FY14 Actual: \$1,367,644 FY15 Actual: \$1,381,852  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$6,458,655 FY14 Actual: \$2,421,388 FY15 Actual: \$2,221,363

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$443,428
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$187,673
American Spaces (not centers)	\$175,757
Support for Foreign Assistance Programs	\$156,650
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	\$156,461

# Nepal

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 143,350 sq. km.  
 Population: 28,174,724 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 54%  
 Refugee population: 38,490  
 Urban population: 18.6%  
 GDP/capita: \$732  
 Unemployment: 3.3%  
 Below poverty line: 25.2%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Partly Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 15 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 82 (2014)  
 Literacy: 60%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 13 (2013)  
 Males: 12 (2013)

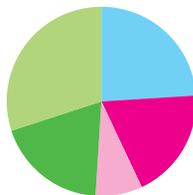


## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$1,336,052 FY14 Actual: \$1,375,089 FY15 Actual: \$1,495,930  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$5,924,257 FY14 Actual: \$1,744,895 FY15 Actual: \$1,863,433

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$736,186
American Spaces (not centers)	\$422,067
Other	\$103,227
Digital Outreach	\$58,728
Media/Press Activities	\$26,839

### Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE  
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

### Map Key

■ Embassy ● Consulate  
▲ American Space

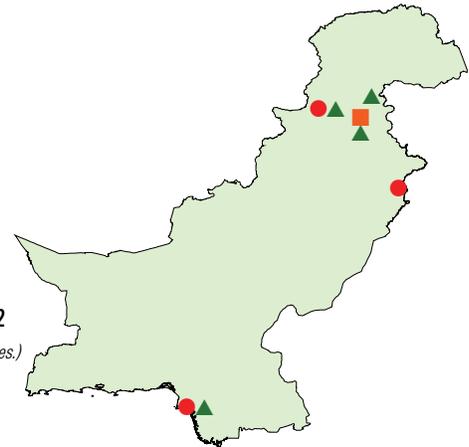
# Pakistan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 770,880 sq. km.  
 Population: 185,044,286 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 55%  
 Refugee population: 1,505,525  
 Urban population: 38.8%  
 GDP/capita: \$1,429  
 Unemployment: 5.6%  
 Below poverty line: 29.5%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

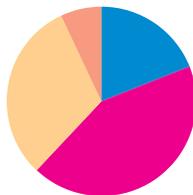
FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 14 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 73 (2014)  
 Literacy: 57%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 7 (2014)  
 Males: 9 (2014)



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$2,452,214 FY14 Actual: \$2,182,889 FY15 Actual: \$2,066,644  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$9,856,499 FY14 Actual: \$3,248,087 FY15 Actual: \$4,203,772  
*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Not Available

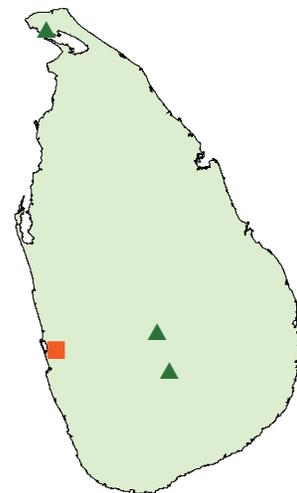
# Sri Lanka

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 62,710 sq. km.  
 Population: 20,639,000 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 40%  
 Refugee population: 511  
 Urban population: 18.4%  
 GDP/capita: \$3,926  
 Unemployment: 4.3%  
 Below poverty line: 6.7%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

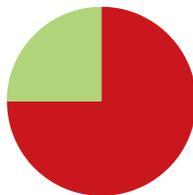
FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 26 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 103 (2014)  
 Literacy: 91%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 14 (2013)  
 Males: 14 (2013)



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$906,556 FY14 Actual: \$885,370 FY15 Actual: \$1,762,009  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$4,148,613 FY14 Actual: \$928,094 FY15 Actual: \$2,025,308  
*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$674,955
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$662,354
American Centers	\$195,037
Media/Press Activities	\$44,911
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$30,185

### Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture    ■ Education    ■ Economics    ■ Science    ■ Military    ■ CVE  
■ Democracy    ■ Civil Society    ■ Women    ■ Youth    ■ Religious    ■ Other

### Map Key

■ Embassy    ● Consulate  
▲ American Space

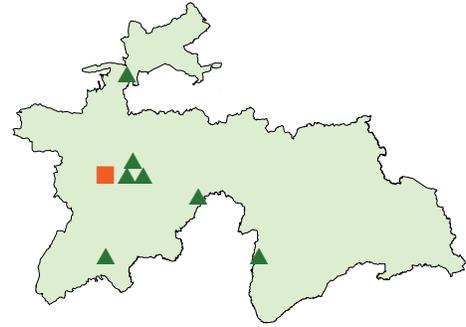
# Tajikistan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: **139,960 sq. km.**  
 Population: **8,295,840 (2014)**  
 Below 24 yrs. old: **56%**  
 Refugee population: **2,026**  
 Urban population: **26.8%**  
 GDP/capita: **\$926**  
 Unemployment: **11.5%**  
 Below poverty line: **32%**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**  
 Internet users/100 people: **17 (2014)**  
 Mobile phones/100 people: **95 (2014)**  
 Literacy: **100%**  
 Avg. years of education: Females: **11 (2013)**  
 Males: **12 (2013)**

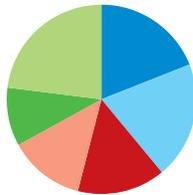


## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: **\$1,053,396** FY14 Actual: **\$1,315,563** FY15 Actual: **\$988,312**  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: **\$6,285,664** FY14 Actual: **\$2,644,280** FY15 Actual: **\$1,895,036**

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Other	<b>\$535,812</b>
Supplementing ECA Programs	<b>\$86,360</b>
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	<b>\$79,558</b>
Media/Press Activities	<b>\$71,665</b>
Support for Mission Initiatives	<b>\$61,407</b>

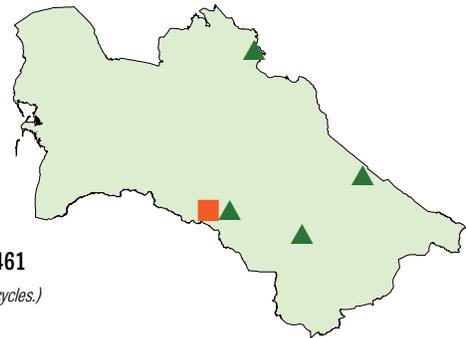
# Turkmenistan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: **469,930 sq. km.**  
 Population: **5,307,188 (2014)**  
 Below 24 yrs. old: **48%**  
 Refugee population: **35**  
 Urban population: **50%**  
 GDP/capita: **\$6,948**  
 Unemployment: **-**  
 Below poverty line: **-**

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**  
 Internet users/100 people: **12 (2014)**  
 Mobile phones/100 people: **136 (2014)**  
 Literacy: **100%**  
 Avg. years of education: Females: **11 (2014)**  
 Males: **11 (2014)**

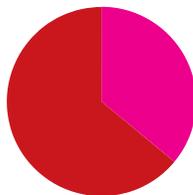


## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: **\$764,074** FY14 Actual: **\$958,089** FY15 Actual: **\$953,170**  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: **\$3,657,128** FY14 Actual: **\$2,361,743** FY15 Actual: **\$1,834,461**

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Other	<b>\$370,547</b>
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	<b>\$147,991</b>
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	<b>\$133,522</b>
Support for Information Resource Centers	<b>\$45,390</b>
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	<b>\$40,734</b>

### Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture    ■ Education    ■ Economics    ■ Science    ■ Military    ■ CVE  
■ Democracy    ■ Civil Society    ■ Women    ■ Youth    ■ Religious    ■ Other

### Map Key

■ Embassy    ● Consulate  
▲ American Space

# Uzbekistan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 425,400 sq. km.  
 Population: 30,757,700 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 48%  
 Refugee population: 125  
 Urban population: 36.4%  
 GDP/capita: \$2,132  
 Unemployment: -  
 Below poverty line: 16%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 44 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 78 (2014)  
 Literacy: 100%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 12 (2011)  
 Males: 12 (2011)



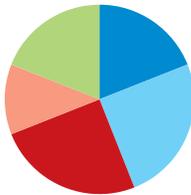
## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$659,339 FY14 Actual: \$763,059 FY15 Actual: \$697,448

**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$3,535,949 FY14 Actual: \$1,171,380 FY15 Actual: \$1,080,478

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### Total PD Spending by Theme



### Top Spending by Activity

Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$217,034
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$176,479
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	\$66,246
Digital Outreach	\$36,849
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	\$30,227

### Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
- Education
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Economics
- Youth
- Religious
- Military
- Other
- CVE

### Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

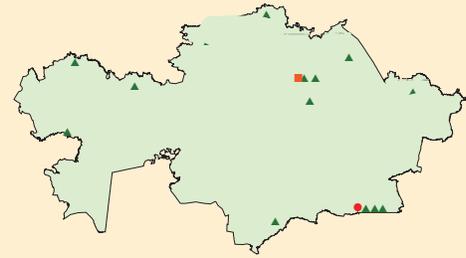
# Spotlight Country: Kazakhstan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 2,699,700 sq. km.  
 Population: 17,289,111 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 42%  
 Refugee population: 633  
 Urban population: 53.2%  
 GDP/capita: \$10,508  
 Unemployment: 5.1%  
 Below poverty line: 2.8%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 55 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 172 (2014)  
 Literacy: 100%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 15 (2015)  
 Males: 15 (2015)

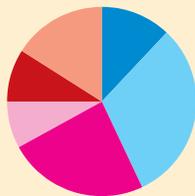


## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$1,728,773 FY14 Actual: \$1,956,091 FY15 Actual: \$2,889,127  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$8,267,234 FY14 Actual: \$3,964,445 FY15 Actual: \$3,365,259

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### D&CP PD Spending by Theme



Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
- Education
- Economics
- Science
- Military
- CVE
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

### D&CP Spending by Activity

Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$650,105
Post-Generated Exchanges	\$471,254
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$441,537
Media/Press Activities	\$356,557
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	\$206,700

### Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

**INCREASE BASE BUDGET:** In addition to the \$1.5 million it receives for local public diplomacy activities, Public Affairs Section (PAS) Kazakhstan facilitates an additional \$1.3 million of funding for regional activities. We recommend an increase of \$700,000 to \$2.2 million in its base budget in order to focus on strengthening ties with critical Kazakhstani populations. We also recommend an increase in the amount of local public diplomacy professionals serving in PAS Kazakhstan, especially in Almaty where locally employed staff levels have not changed since 2008.

**CONTINUE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS:** PAS Kazakhstan has a sound strategic planning process where staff identifies major U.S. foreign policy goals and themes that would resonate with target audiences and then aligns various public diplomacy informational, educational and cultural tools to connect with the audiences. The “One Victory” campaign in 2015 was especially innovative and effective. The “25 Years Together” campaign has built on that success and expanded to incorporate almost every program PAS Kazakhstan carries out in 2016. This campaign approach to building relationships with local audiences should be a model for other public diplomacy missions abroad.

### MODIFY FULBRIGHT PROGRAMS FOR KAZAKHSTAN:

Due to the Kazakhstani government's Bolashak program, which funds the study of Kazakhstani students to the United States, the Fulbright Foreign Students program in Kazakhstan adds less value than in other countries. PAS Kazakhstan has two slots for Kazakhstanis on the Fulbright Foreign Students program, while Bolashak sends hundreds of students each year. Recruiting for the two slots, however, takes a considerable amount of resources from the PAS with questionable comparative return. We therefore recommend suspending the Fulbright Foreign Student program for Kazakhstanis and concentrating on additional Fulbright Visiting Scholars who can help develop research-based partnerships between U.S. and Kazakhstani universities.

### DESIGNATE TWO PRIORITY AMERICAN SPACES FOR KAZAKHSTAN:

Kazakhstan is the hub within Central Asia and its two main cities have very different target audiences: Almaty is the cultural and commercial center; Astana is the governmental center. Youth in both cities matter for different strategic reasons, both of which have an effect on U.S. policy in the region. We recommend that there be two priority spaces so that youth and civil society leaders in Astana can benefit from the same level of interaction with the United States as cultural and economic leaders in Almaty.

**INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE U.S.-CENTRAL ASIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION (CAEF):** Almaty hosts 48 students from across Central Asia studying on U.S.-funded university scholarships, which are facilitated by the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (CAEF) at KIMEP University. The program offers these students a U.S.-style education at a fraction of the cost of a U.S.-based exchange program. Funding is set to run out after the last group of Enterprise Fellows begins their undergraduate studies in the fall of 2017. We recommend identifying additional funding outside of the PAS budget to continue enrolling CAEF fellows from the five Central Asian Republics at CAEF's operating cost of \$1.7 million per year.

## OVERVIEW

While the U.S. relationship with Kazakhstan, which borders Russia and China, is strong, the mission has faced serious challenges in simultaneously trying to counter negative influence from the Kremlin and violent extremism encouraged by Daesh. The Public Affairs Sections in Astana and Almaty strengthened the bilateral relationship while also addressing regional and global issues related to fighting terrorism, climate change and narcotics trafficking. Engaging with the Kazakhstani public and expanding the space for civil society are core priorities for the U.S. mission's integrated country strategy and educational, informational and cultural programs are incorporated into nearly every foreign policy objective. The environment in Kazakhstan is rich and diverse for U.S. public diplomacy activities in order to keep the local population open to the United States and U.S. foreign policy.

We found strategically minded public diplomacy leadership in both Astana and Almaty, who drive programs and information activities using a model campaign approach. However, PAS Kazakhstan needs more resources. It received \$2.8 million in fiscal year 2015, yet just \$1.5 million was for bilateral public diplomacy activities. The remaining \$1.3 million was for regional activities run through the U.S. mission. The Public Affairs Sections often have to facilitate regional programs throughout Central Asia. For instance, the U.S. consulate in Almaty is the host to regional political and economic conferences, as well as programs for Central Asian and Afghan students, putting a considerable strain on the local staff. If the United States is going to support generational goals of building press freedoms, civil society, countering violent extremism and building a more solid connection with the West, then the funding stream needs to be more sustainable.

## BUDGET AND SPENDING

The base budget for the U.S. mission in Kazakhstan is \$1.5 million. Yet, an additional \$1.3 million of the money is

spent on regional projects and is not entirely absorbed in country. Almaty is a regional hub for Central Asia and the consulate there must manage various policy priorities, all of which have a public diplomacy focus. Given its regional leadership in Central Asia, we strongly encourage an increase in the base budget for Kazakhstan to at least \$2.2 million. This budget increase would increase in the local staff in the Public Affairs Sections, especially in Almaty, which is a hotbed of educational, cultural, press, social media and civil society outreach activity despite the staffing levels not changing for nearly a decade.

## STRENGTHENING HIGHER EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN AND ACADEMIC EXCHANGES IN INNOVATIVE WAYS

A major objective of the U.S. mission is to improve the Kazakhstani educational system, specifically through encouraging partnerships between U.S. and Kazakhstani universities; exchange programs; supporting education reform; and supporting English language teachers. A recent survey found that 47.6 percent of Kazakhstani youth want to study abroad. Within that, 29.6 percent wanted to go to Russia, 23.7 percent to the United States, 16.3 percent to the European Union, and 14.6 percent to China. According to Open Doors Data, in the 2014–2015 school year, 2,017 Kazakhstani students studied in the United States, a slight 0.2 percent increase from the previous year. Of them, 359 Kazakhstani students enrolled in graduate programs and the rest are pursuing undergraduate degrees. The majority of the students travel to California, Texas, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania. Almaty is now a hub for American students studying Russian and Kazakh languages, since several U.S.-funded language programs relocated to Kazakhstan from Russia. Over the course of the academic year, more than 60 American students study in Almaty through U.S. programs.

Almaty is also home to the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (CAEF) at KIMEP University, which hosts 48 students from across Central Asia studying on U.S.-funded university scholarships. CAEF facilitates this program that offers students, known as Enterprise Fellows, a U.S.-style education at a fraction of the cost of a U.S.-based exchange program. In addition, 47 students are enrolled through CAEF at Bishkek's American University of Central Asia (AUCA), although students from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are banned by their respective governments from studying at AUCA. The program began nine years ago with a \$15.7 million dollar U.S. government grant and has 67 alumni thus far from Kazakhstan (22), Kyrgyzstan (8), Uzbekistan (7), Tajikistan (9) and Turkmenistan (21). However, the funding is set to run out after the last group of Enterprise Fellows begins their undergraduate studies in fall 2017. The program has produced exemplary graduates who have made an impact across Central Asia and maintained strong ties with U.S. institutions. We recommend identifying additional funding outside of the PAS budget

to continue enrolling CAEF follows from the five Central Asian Republics at CAEF's operating cost of \$1.7 million per year.

In addition, the Kazakhstani government has put a premium on sending students abroad for a college education as long as they return home. This Bolashak program, the Center for International Programs, has sent hundreds of students to the United States and Europe in the last few years. Within this context, the Fulbright foreign student program, which sends two students per year to the United States, requires considerable staff time within the PAS to manage. However, the program does not seem to be relevant within the Kazakh context and has comparably less impact. We believe that the Fulbright Foreign Student program should be suspended in Kazakhstan and that the Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau should instead concentrate on sending additional Fulbright Visiting Scholars who can help develop research-based partnerships between U.S. and Kazakhstani universities.

### **BEST PRACTICE: APPLYING STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN APPROACHES TO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

PAS Kazakhstan has worked to identify key themes that resonate with Kazakhstani audiences, and then work actively to make sure they align the right tools to convey those messages. The 70th Anniversary of the end of World War II was a prime opportunity to convey a history of U.S.-Kazakhstani coordination and partnership, which the mission planned for well in advance. The mission also delivered a comprehensive campaign to promote the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations with Kazakhstan. The campaigns worked not just to strengthen bilateral ties but also reverse misperceptions about the United States.

PAS coordinated with their interagency colleagues to ensure the campaigns highlighted security, economic, health and people-to-people ties. The yearlong "25 Years Together" campaign employed a comprehensive set of public diplomacy tools that resonated with Kazakhstani audiences. Organized according to strategic themes, the campaign included programs to highlight innovation, friendship and partnership. "Innovation" featured a TechWomen delegation, Maker Space forum, and TechCamp, in addition to business training for Kazakhstani young professionals in the United States. "Friendship" featured an American filmmaker who taught young Kazakhstani directors how to tell Kazakhstan's independent story through documentary film; a youth sports exchange with the Muhammad Ali Center in Kentucky that featured best practices on countering violent extremism; and cultural collaborations between Kazakhstanis and Americans that resonated strongly within a society that sometimes feels isolated from the West. The mission combined many of these elements into a public festival, USKZ Fest (U.S.-Kazakhstan Fest), which exposed thousand to U.S. messages over the course of the three-day event. "Partnership" included panel conversations and forums

to discuss issues of mutual interest for the U.S.-Kazakhstani relationship. The mission used the three-country program of ultra-marathoner Dean Karnazes to link the campaign with neighboring U.S. embassies and highlight U.S. efforts across the region. Each activity was amplified through social media content that went viral on multiple platforms—Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—and empowered youth audiences to create digital content celebrating the U.S.-Kazakhstani relationship.

### **CREATING TWO PRIORITY AMERICAN SPACES**

**Almaty:** The IIP-designated priority American Space in Kazakhstan is in Almaty, which is the commercial and cultural hub. It opened in November 2013 within the Begalin State Children's Library and was designed with a grant from IIP's American Spaces Office, in addition to pro bono services by an American architect and corporate donations from Steelcase Company and Chevron. It included a Maker Space, which encouraged innovation and collaboration through 3D printers, robotics, micro-controllers, build it yourself computers and science and inventors' kits. The space directly intersected with the Integrated Country Strategy, which included goals to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship. Makers Space programs ranged from how to use a 3D printer to DIY Science to primary science courses. Other American Corner programs included English classes and EducationUSA preparatory classes, in addition to informational programs about Fulbright and other exchanges. Cultural activities, celebrating Jazz History, Earth Day and Toastmasters were also popular. Visitor levels increased considerably over the course of two years: In November 2013, there were 650 visitors and 32 programs; by March 2016, there were 3,510 visitors and 55 programs. The mission is now in the process of moving the American Corner, due to renovation plans at the Begalin Library. IIP has approved PAS' plans to move the American Corner to Almaty Towers, a premiere downtown co-working space and technology hub, where it will be more accessible and attractive to various entrepreneurs, technology professionals and youth in the city.

**Astana:** The capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, has an American Corner in a local university, which also has a maker space and a robust program schedule that attracts consistently large audiences. However, it is not a designated priority space. Seeing first-hand its potential, we believe an increase in resources for an additional priority space in Astana is important. Youth in both cities matter for different strategic reasons, both of which have an effect on U.S. policy in the region. The youth in Astana are closer to the border with Russia, and are more likely to be future governmental and civil society leaders. We recommend a second priority space within the country so that youth and young professionals in Astana can benefit from the same level of interaction with the United States as cultural and economic leaders in Almaty.

Another core mission goal is to improve the Kazakhstani public's access to objective, pluralistic and professional news sources. This means supporting the development of a free press through in-country trainings, especially using the English language, and the use of IVLP and the speaker programs. The mission has recognized that it is Kazakhstani citizens who are the best positioned to respond to disinformation from violent extremists and pro-Russian sources. The mission's strong social media presence that targets Kazakhstanis under the age of 40 with the goal of raising awareness of the U.S. mission's activities<sup>1</sup> has created an affinity network that often identifies disinformation and works proactively to counter it. The embassy's "Diaspora narratives" campaign, which cost \$35,000, has been one strategy to strengthen ties with this network. The campaign deployed Kazakhstan's most popular blogger and an independent filmmaker to the United States, where he and his team captured compelling stories of Kazakhstanis living in the United States. Each resulting story and video has racked up hundreds of thousands of views. Beyond this program, PAS has cultivated strong relationships with Kazakhstan's creative community, which has helped them to create and deliver compelling content to share with Kazakhstani audiences.

The Kazakh news media is heavily influenced by Russia. Russia-affiliated Channel One Eurasia has considerable influence on segments of the population as Kazakhstan's top network and the local news media often repeats Russian-language content. The Kazakhstani public has often pushed back at Russian disinformation through social media, including disinformation from Channel One. While there is relatively more media freedom in the country than the rest of the Central Asia region, PAS

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<sup>1</sup> As of April, the PAS Almaty Facebook page, which is in Kazakh, Russian and English, has 59,500 fans and reaches an average of 500,000 people per week with its content. Its Twitter handle has 5,100 subscribers and has an average retweet of 9 times a day. Its Instagram page has 2,016 followers and is targeted mainly toward youth.

Kazakhstan is actively working to improve those freedoms and expand the capacity for investigative reporting and critical thinking. The PAS's journalism tradecraft training for journalists included a one-time exchange program to build ties between Kazakh and American journalists and expose them to U.S. news media transparency practices at a considerably low cost. Six journalists spent almost 6 weeks in the United States. The Press and Public Diplomacy Office in the Bureau of South and Central Asia also funded one Knight Fellow for fiscal year 2015 to be based in Astana and provide training for journalists in other Central Asian Countries. In addition, PAS has assisted courses for 35 journalists in Astana and Almaty in intermediate English, using Economic Support Funds. They focus on journalists who already have an intermediate level of English and need to be able to use it professionally.

The U.S. mission in Kazakhstan's biggest concern with these programs is the limit and uncertainty of funding. Until fiscal year 2016 they had no ESF funds for media. In fiscal year 2016 they had \$149,000 and expect to have \$300,000 in fiscal year 2017. But when one Knight Fellow costs \$200,000 and a tiny one-off exchange program is \$100,000, the funding does not go far. An increase in ESF funding for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 to \$750,000 per year would fund an exchange program for two or three years, create a pipeline of Knight Fellows or other training programs in Kazakhstan and make a visible difference in the quality of the Kazakhstani news media.

# Spotlight Country: Pakistan

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 770,880 sq. km.  
 Population: 185,044,286 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 55%  
 Refugee population: 1,505,525  
 Urban population: 38.8%  
 GDP/capita: \$1,429  
 Unemployment: 5.6%  
 Below poverty line: 29.5%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 14 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 73 (2014)  
 Literacy: 57%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 7 (2014)  
 Males: 9 (2014)

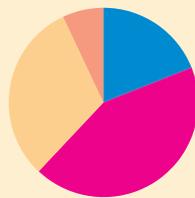
## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$2,452,214 FY14 Actual: \$2,182,889 FY15 Actual: \$2,066,644

**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$9,856,499 FY14 Actual: \$3,248,087 FY15 Actual: \$4,203,772

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### D&CP PD Spending by Theme

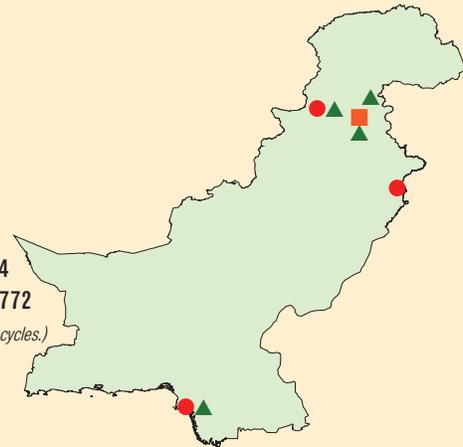


Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE  
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

### D&CP Spending by Activity

Not Available



### Map Key

■ Embassy ● Consulate  
▲ American Space

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

**INCREASE BOTH CORE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY BUDGETS FOR PAKISTAN AS RELYING ON ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUNDS IS UNSUSTAINABLE:** It is imperative that the base PD budget for Pakistan in the Diplomatic and Consular Program (D&CP) budget increase considerably and that additional funding be sought from Congress in the Educational and Cultural Exchange (ECE) budget for exchanges with Pakistan. The Fulbright program, which is currently boasted as being the largest in the world and is the flagship PD program in Pakistan, as well as other programs such as the English Access Microscholarship Program and alumni engagement, are sustained at their current surge levels by foreign assistance funding. Currently, in fiscal year 2016, approximately \$55 million of temporary Economic Support Funds, Overseas Contingency Operations funds (ESF-OCO) and Public Diplomacy Overseas Contingency Operations (PD-OCO) funds carry PD activities.<sup>1</sup> ESF-OCO funds for Pakistan have been in steady decline since their peak of 2010, and will decrease significantly again through fiscal year 2017. The ECE budget – currently at more than \$590 million -- would need more than an additional \$30 million to absorb and maintain current program levels in Pakistan. For the sake

of sustaining relationships with the 19,000 alumni, leveraging the programs that exist to reach key mission goals, and creating new networks, there cannot be a steep decline in PD activity in Pakistan. A sustainable spending plan for Pakistan is essential for the mission to plan future programs while setting appropriate expectations with the Pakistani alumni and public.

**FOCUS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING ON TEACHERS TO MAKE IT MORE SUSTAINABLE:** The long-term normalization of the PD budget in Pakistan will need to include space for English language education and training. Pakistan has the largest English language program in the world with 3,000 current students supported by \$2 million annually and \$15 million in open grants. In order to promote long-term sustainability of quality English language teaching, we recommend a shift in the focus of efforts from teaching students to training Pakistani teachers charged with teaching English. In FY 2015, 450 teachers were trained, a number which could be doubled in order to reach more students in the long term, via a combination of virtual and in country face-to-face programs and exchanges.

**EXPAND CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM IN KARACHI TO REGIONAL JOURNALISTS:** In order

<sup>1</sup> Note: In fiscal year 2016, Pakistan receives both fiscal year 2016/2017 PD funds and fiscal year 2015/2016 ESF money.

to ensure the Center for Excellence in Journalism's sustainability, and the sustainability of training programs for Pakistani journalists overall, we recommend additional funds be allocated for journalists not based in Karachi so they can travel to the center for coursework. Professional journalism in Pakistan is a critical U.S. public diplomacy goal and it is essential that this center get maximum use, which will also diminish costs for journalism exchange programs to the U.S.

**INCREASE INTERACTION & TRAINING FOR LOCAL STAFF:** Since there is such high turnover among the American professionals, it is important the local Pakistani PD professionals in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar feel connected to one another. We recommend that they gather for a retreat at least once a year, where they can also receive in-country skills training along with some of their American counterparts.

**INCREASE AUDIENCE RESEARCH FOR ALL MEDIA AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OUTREACH:** The press and social media team at the embassy needs to have consistent audience research to better understand the changing attitudes of the Pakistani population and target their messages, video content and the mediums to deliver both accordingly. This consistent research will also greatly benefit the rest of the section in understanding how to best execute programming and monitor their progress.

## OVERVIEW

The bilateral relationship between the United States and Pakistan is on somewhat steady ground after several years of turmoil and uncertainty. Straightforward or even positive coverage of the relationship has increased, however the Government of Pakistan and the military, continue to strategically use anti-American rhetoric, the Pakistani news media regularly amplifies conspiracy theories, and just 22 percent of the Pakistani public has a favorable view of the U.S., according to the 2015 Pew Global Attitudes Project. In order to advance critical U.S. mission goals, it is essential for public diplomacy to build relationships and trust with government officials, civil society leaders, academics, media representatives and youth. The Public Affairs Sections (PAS), which are part of the U.S. Mission in Pakistan, have built a credible network of Pakistani partners and alumni through its programs. These alumni remain active through the Pakistani U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), the largest alumni network of U.S. programs worldwide.

The United States is profoundly humanized through people-to-people ties. U.S. Public diplomacy (PD) efforts in Pakistan aim to emphasize with the Pakistani public our countries' shared interests in the advancement of democracy and peace, security, and economic development, both

within Pakistan and the South Asia region. The core mission goals that PD supports are to reduce violent extremism and terrorism, encourage strategic stability, and promote economic growth and development of government capacity. A consistent level of engagement in the country is essential in Pakistan as isolation from the public provokes suspicion about U.S. activities. As PAS for the U.S. mission in Pakistan operate in a highly restrictive and critical threat security environment, the resources to support U.S.-based exchanges like Fulbright and outreach platforms such as the English language learning programs, American Spaces, and alumni networks are critical.

ACPD has a major concern about the sustainability of the current funding for public diplomacy activities, which was at about \$55 million in fiscal year 2016. The vast majority of this funding comes from ESF-OCO and PD-OCO funds, which are temporary and will inevitably decrease. We believe it is essential that, going forward from fiscal year 2017, PAS begin to adjust towards sustainable levels for its programs while the administration seeks Congressional support for normalizing the majority of Pakistan PD programs into the core D&CP and ECE budgets.

## BUDGET SUSTAINABILITY

The 2009 diplomatic surges in Afghanistan and Pakistan were accompanied by sharp increases in ESF funding, which was applied in part to surge PD activities in both countries to help achieve the U.S. government's priority foreign assistance goals. ESF-OCO and PD-OCO funds were applied to expand key programs such as the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship, the International Visitor Leadership Program, and English language programs. The Fulbright Program in Pakistan has received \$19.5 million in ESF for expanded activity since 2006 through transfers to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) from the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program in Pakistan, which supports Pakistani teenagers to study at an American high school for a year, also currently receives ESF-OCO funding for expanded reach. This program targets underserved populations and allows them to have a transformative experience in the United States, while also teaching American youth about Pakistan. In fiscal year 2015, the loss of ECE-OCO funding and competing priorities in a declining ESF-OCO budget has resulted in the number of participants declining. Another ECA program model that targets underserved Pakistani youth, the English Access Microscholarship Program, is a critical youth leadership program in Pakistan that advances multiple mission objectives and with PD-OCO funds from PAS Islamabad.

These ESF-OCO and PD-OCO funds for Pakistan will continue to diminish and supplemental OCO funding will not continue indefinitely. It is critical that the incoming

administration work with Congress to normalize Pakistan exchange and English language programs in the PD base accounts going forward. The ECE budget – currently at more than \$590 million -- would need more than an additional \$30 million to absorb and maintain current program levels in Pakistan.

In addition, an increase of PD base budget spending is also critical in order to pay the salaries of the locally employed staff in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar and all of the press and social media engagement, countering violent extremism, civil society grants, and other information programs. Currently, in fiscal year 2016, there is only \$435,000 of Enduring D&CP spending for PAS Pakistan, which is roughly .008 percent of the total \$55 million budget. A sustainable funding stream for Pakistan is essential for the mission to plan future programs while setting appropriate expectations with the Pakistani alumni and public.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

Pakistan currently ranks fourth in the world for the number of incidents and deaths due to violent extremism. In the last two years, it has endured repeated terrorist and violent extremist attacks, including the one at Lahore Park in March 2016, Bacha Khan University in Charsadda in January 2016, the Army Public School in Peshawar in December 2014, and the Air Force Base in Badaber in September 2015.

Reducing violent extremism and terrorism to make Pakistan more stable is the number one U.S. mission goal in Pakistan as it also improves U.S. national security. In 2011, the Community Engagement Office (CEO) was created within PAS Islamabad to “reduce the number of individuals in Pakistan who accept the legitimacy of ideologies and narratives that justify the use of politically minded violence counter to U.S. national interests.” The office’s efforts aim to increase “civilian and non-civilian capacity to counter violent extremist narratives with a focus on vulnerable populations.” It currently operates with \$1.8 million of ESF-OCO funding and \$700,000 of PD-OCO funding that goes towards grants, messaging, and outreach to universities and research. It would like to increase its budget to \$4 million.

Recently, the office has identified gaps where they could make a greater contribution: increasing the civilian government’s capacity to counter violent narratives and strengthen their partnership with Pakistani civil society in these efforts; training and building the news media’s capacity to examine the root causes and potential solutions

for ending violence;<sup>2</sup> and creating messages that rationally and emotionally connect with Pakistanis to do the same. This involves working with traditional PD tools to train journalists in-country and through visitor programs; enhancing media literacy among the public via English language programs, critical thinking workshops, university partners, and American spaces programming; and expanding online dialogue via social media platforms. The CEO works to improve the quantity and quality of research on the drivers and effective counters of extremism in the Pakistani context. It also supports CVE activists within Pakistan through cooperative agreements and grants, building and sustaining their brands, having them participate in exchanges and training programs, and leveraging partnerships to create a community of interest.

The embassy has an internal CVE working group that unites pertinent sections of the mission, in addition to an international CVE working group that coordinates activities with allied groups. There can be, however, a lack of coordination with Washington, especially when it comes to funding. The office gains just under \$2 million in ESF-OCO money, which is temporary. There are no central repositories for money at the State Department on this community engagement work and no clear way on how they can apply for it. It is important that funding for this work be added to the D&CP .7 budget for Pakistan. It would also help if there was a regional community of practice where officials in the Pakistan office could work with those in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India.

### **SOCIAL AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

While the U.S. government is unpopular in Pakistan, Americans are not. PD social media efforts try to put a human face on the mission through videos in the Urdu, Sindhi, and Pashto languages via Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Instagram platforms. Pakistanis who travel to the United States on exchanges also share their experiences via social media content. While some IIP campaigns are useful to PAS Islamabad, Pakistan has a crowded, competitive, and highly charged media environment. Localized content matters to connect with Pakistani-specific audiences.

The social media program in Pakistan focuses on connecting with Pakistani youth through providing original, short video content. The video content is created for distribution via social and traditional news media platforms. A video of Ambassador David Hale’s visit to Pakistan’s largest mosque, Faisal Mosque, was picked up by the English-language newspapers Dawn, The Nation and the Daily Times. The videos also highlight other U.S. embassy officials to

<sup>2</sup> The media must keep extremists accountable while shaping narratives that counter their message and provide a public service to Pakistanis wanting to live in peace. The media “is a critical vehicle to convey ideas that legitimize or delegitimize terrorists, violent extremist groups and narratives.”

showcase their expertise, i.e. clean energy and economics, and make them and their policy portfolios more tangible for the Pakistani public. The four videos on the U.S.-Pakistan Clean Energy partnership had 671,800 views, 17,200 likes, and 2,500 shares by August 2016.

The campaign, #ThisIsPakistan, shows U.S. embassy officials appreciating Pakistani food and culture, and local heroes, like Master Ayub, who has taught young children English for free for 29 years. Collectively, they have had more than 10.8 million views and 55,000 shares by August 2016. Post also links to IIP's "ShareAmerica" content, which receives anywhere from 300 to 2,000 link clicks.

At the time of writing, Embassy Islamabad and Consulates General Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar have a combined six million followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The respective social media teams create original content in addition to sharing each other's posts. Social media teams also monitor and share relevant content from other U.S. Government organizations such as USAID Pakistan. Specifically, the Embassy Facebook page had 2 million followers (the second-largest U.S. embassy page; the U.S. embassy in Dhaka has 3 million followers); they gain an average of 20,000 new followers a week. Sixty-three percent of the followers are men between the ages of 18-34, and 30 percent are women in the same age bracket.

Consulate General Karachi has also taken the lead in organizing periodic social media workshops to promote collaboration between the embassy and consulates' social media teams. To enhance outreach, the embassy and consulates have also worked with partner organizations such as the International Education and Research Network (iEARN), the Access English-language Microscholarship Program, the Pakistan U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), and the U.S. Educational Foundation Pakistan (USEFP) to produce and disseminate quality content, providing them exposure to a wider audience.

### **PAKISTANI LOCAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PROFESSIONALS' SUPPORT**

The local public diplomacy professionals for the U.S. Mission in Pakistan have remained committed to the goals and activities of the Public Affairs Sections for many years and have worked with many American professionals who often serve one-year tours. They believe strongly that PD work can be maximized if all PD professionals can have more mobility to reach more Pakistani audiences. The restrictive security environment makes it very difficult to do more outreach than is already being done. However, local PD professionals can help their American colleagues make the case to security officials for why certain outreach activities are mission essential.

In addition, since there is such high turnover among the American professionals, it is important the local Pakistani PD professionals in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and

Peshawar feel connected to one another. We recommend that they gather for a retreat at least once a year, where they can also receive in-country skills training along with some of their American counterparts. Critical to this training is grants and budgeting, as the staff handles millions of U.S. dollars.

### **CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM**

The Center for Excellence in Journalism is a \$4 million investment in the future of professional journalism in Pakistan. It was successfully launched on February 22, 2016 with the support of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University and the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. The concept is that more training for journalists, photojournalists and communicators – in Pakistan and the region – will take place in country in a more sustainable fashion at the Center in Karachi rather than relying on exchange programs. There is a tradition of mass communications degrees in Pakistan, but not a specific focus on journalism training.

The Center has a one-year Masters program for 30-40 students beginning in fall 2016, and shorter certificate programs for journalism-based skills, including one for NGO communication specialists who work with journalists. Three of the Center's faculty members are attending the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern in preparation for their teaching roles. The Center also does extensive outreach to thousands of journalists throughout the region and also hosts alumni events and facilitates U.S. sponsored exchanges and is open to journalists from other countries.

In order to ensure the Center's sustainability and support Pakistanis' access to accurate information through professional journalism, we recommend additional funds to be allocated for journalists not based in Karachi to be able to travel to the center for coursework. Professional journalism in Pakistan is a critical U.S. public diplomacy goal and it is essential that this center get maximum use, which will also diminish costs for journalism exchange programs to the United States.

### **EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS & THE PUAN NETWORK: LARGEST FOREIGN PUBLIC OUTREACH WORLDWIDE**

The U.S. mission in Pakistan manages 38 cultural and exchange programs in order to build relationships with a skeptical Pakistani public. The exchanges team in PAS

manages 17 of them<sup>3</sup> that engage more than 120 Pakistanis and the cultural team manages two ECA programs (Center Stage and One Beat). The implementing partner iEARN runs the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) for 100 Pakistani youth and the Summer Sisters Institute for roughly 17 participants. The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (Fulbright Commission) -- through offices in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi -- runs 21 of them that engage more than 570 Pakistanis.<sup>4</sup> These include the core Fulbright programs, the EducationUSA network, the PUAN alumni network, and the Prometric testing centers. A total of roughly 5,000 Pakistanis and 900 Americans have participated in all USEFP-run programs; in FY 2015, there were 595 grantees.

Pakistan currently receives the largest amount of U.S. government funding of any Fulbright Program worldwide. The USAID Mission in Pakistan, in consultation with the Government of Pakistan, initiated a five-year agreement in FY 2005, under which USAID agreed to support the Fulbright Program by providing up to \$19.5 million annually through an Economic Support Fund (ESF) transfer to ECA. Fulbright continues to receive \$19.5 million in ESF-OCO annually. In a major recognition of Fulbright's value to Pakistan, in 2016, the Government of Pakistan agreed to provide more than \$5 million annually for five years to fund up to 125 additional Pakistani Ph.D. scholars to study in the United States. As of September 2016, the first \$5 million has already come through.

Since 1950, the Fulbright Program in Pakistan has funded more than 3,000 Pakistanis to study and conduct research in the United States and more than 800 U.S. citizens to study, conduct research, and lecture in Pakistan. Between 2010-2016, there were 45 Americans who went to Pakistan on the Fulbright Specialist Program and six on the Fulbright Scholar Program. The security situation in Pakistan makes it difficult for Americans to pursue long-term

<sup>3</sup> SUSI on Public Policy; SUSI on Women Leadership; SUSI for Scholars and Secondary School Educators; IVLP; Secretary of State's Annual International Women of Courage Award; Fortune/Global Women's Mentoring Partnership; International Writing Program; Sports Visitors; Global Sports Mentoring Program; SCA Region Legislative Fellows Program; American Council for Young Political Leaders; Instructional Leadership Institute for Pakistani Educators Summer Program; Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Coca Cola Scholarship Program; U.S. - Pakistan Professional Partnership for Journalists; Atlas Corps Pakistani Fellowship; Foreign Press reporting tours; and the Critical Thinking Forum Exchange Program.

<sup>4</sup> Fulbright Master's Program, Fulbright Ph.D. program, Fulbright Scholar Program (U.S. and Pakistan), Fulbright (U.S.) Specialist Program, Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan, Near East and South Asia Undergraduate Exchange Program, Community College Initiative (CCIP), Community College Administrator Program (CCAP), and the U.S. - Pakistan Professional Partnership for Journalists.

programs in Pakistan. Since 2006, there have been 939 Masters students and 197 Ph.D. students supported under Fulbright in the United States. The most Pakistani Fulbright students came from Karachi, Lahore and other Punjab areas. Fifty-five percent were female and 45 percent were male. Most of them came from the private sector and they mainly studied engineering, social sciences and business/finance -- fields that are key to the development of Pakistan and the advancement of U.S. objectives for Pakistan's growth and resilience. In FY 2015, USEFP conducted outreach to more than 70,000 students in 35 cities and through extensive social media networks.

**PUAN:** The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP, the Fulbright Commission) also co-manages the Pakistan - US Alumni Network (PUAN), which is among the largest U.S. government exchange alumni networks worldwide, with significant participation from English language program alumni. It consists of more than 19,000 members in 12 national chapters and is funded through a five year \$3.1 million grant. The Humphrey Alumni Association of Pakistan (HAAP) has nine Humphrey chapters. PUAN disperses small grants for projects that focus on community service, entrepreneurship, journalism training, women's empowerment, cultural preservation, and other issues.<sup>5</sup>

**EducationUSA:** There are three EducationUSA Centers -- in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi -- that make more than 840,000 contacts a year. Eleven advisors and four staff members conduct outreach, guide students through the U.S. application process, train local school counselors, support U.S. admissions representatives, run mock admission tests, and other support functions. The Pakistani High School Counselors' Tours to the United States included 20 counselors who visited 17 colleges and universities in Illinois, Indiana and Iowa. In 2016, 17 counselors visited 18 higher education institutions in California and Arizona. A new Career Pathways program is a three-week summer exchange for 30 high school students to explore various career paths in classrooms in Iowa, Indiana and Illinois. The program, minus airfare, costs \$3,000 and is self-funded by the students.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING:**

Since 2012, a Regional English Language Officer has been based exclusively in Pakistan and works throughout the country. Pakistan has the largest English programming portfolio in the world, with 3,000 current Access students and \$2 million annually and \$15 million in open grants. The programs include Access; English Works!, which focuses

<sup>5</sup> The Fulbright Heroes Short Documentary Series was a 14 part series released in July 2016 that featured Fulbright alumni who are leading change in Pakistan and was produced in collaboration with Oscar-winning Fulbright alumnae Haya Fatima Iqbal.

on older youth audiences; and a radio program, which focuses on teacher training for teachers at the primary school level; in-country teacher training; and exchange programs, like the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA), which brings 20 English language teachers to the United States for a six week professional development program. TEA in Pakistan is administered via IREX in the United States. The Regional English Language Office (RELO) funds and facilitates (when ECA/A/L funded) a variety of small exchange programs each year for administrators, teachers, and students connected to English language teaching and learning. The timing, length, and content of these programs vary due to shifting funding levels and Bureau and Mission priorities. Often participants may already be alumni of in-country RELO programs, such as English Language Specialist-led Teacher Training Institutes or Post's English Access Microscholarship Program. Most RELO programs are focused on public-sector educators and students, with a specific concentration on hard-to-reach areas and vulnerable or marginalized populations. Typically these programs are implemented by a local or U.S.-based partner organization, but RELO staff are involved in selection, including in-person or Skype interviews, and pre-departure briefings for all participants.

The long-term normalization of the PD budget in Pakistan will need to include funding for English language training. In fiscal year 2015 roughly 450 teachers were trained, while 3,000 students were directly taught. Since the current elevated level of funding for English language education is not sustainable, the focus should be on teacher training as much as on teaching young people, if not more, to build local capacity.

## AMERICAN SPACES

The American Center in Islamabad closed in 2008, but there is currently an Information Resource Center (IRC) in the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad that is used for on-site events and accessible to the public by appointment. There are 18 Lincoln Corners -- small American Spaces at host Pakistani host institutions -- throughout the country, with one more under construction. In order to maintain a degree of security, the coordinators at the Lincoln Corners normally invite specific audiences for programs and then publicize the events afterwards.

The embassy and consulates' locally employed staff are essential to the success of the corners, in creating the terms of the MOUs with the host institutions, in maintaining the relationships with them, and in increasing visitors to the spaces. In the last year, there was an 80 percent increase in foot traffic to the spaces.

**Karachi:** A new priority American space opened in July 2016 in the Karachi Public Library, a prime space for which the Consulate's Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO) has worked diligently to secure buy-in and to ensure that the open access principles for the space are maintained and that there is also equal access for men and women. There is an average of 1,000 visitors a day to the library (800 men, 200 women), promising a steady stream of visitors who will, thanks to the CAO and strong support from the Information Resources Officer in Islamabad and IIP, be able to showcase the best of American technology, culture, and literature while also participating in panel discussions on issues of importance to Pakistanis and Americans. ACPD applauds the CAO in Karachi in particular for extending the reach of U.S. public diplomacy activities in a critical yet non-permissive environment.

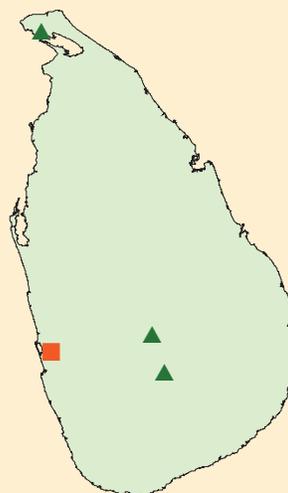
# Spotlight Country: Sri Lanka

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 62,710 sq. km.  
 Population: 20,639,000 (2014)  
 Below 24 yrs. old: 40%  
 Refugee population: 511  
 Urban population: 18.4%  
 GDP/capita: \$3,926  
 Unemployment: 4.3%  
 Below poverty line: 6.7%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free  
 Internet users/100 people: 26 (2014)  
 Mobile phones/100 people: 103 (2014)  
 Literacy: 91%  
 Avg. years of education: Females: 14 (2013)  
 Males: 14 (2013)

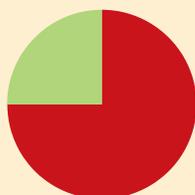


## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

**D&CP Total** FY13 Actual: \$906,556 FY14 Actual: \$885,370 FY15 Actual: \$1,762,009  
**Total Reported** FY13 Actual: \$4,148,613 FY14 Actual: \$928,094 FY15 Actual: \$2,025,308

*(Total reported funding for FY13, FY14, and FY15 cannot be compared directly due to delays in reporting from long program cycles.)*

### D&CP PD Spending by Theme



Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
- Education
- Economics
- Science
- Military
- CVE
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

### D&CP Spending by Activity

Other	\$674,955
VIP Visits (Press Support)	\$662,354
American Centers	\$195,037
Media/Press Activities	\$44,911
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$30,185

### Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### INCREASE BASE BUDGET FOR GREATER CIVIL SOCIETY

**OUTREACH:** The Public Affairs Section (PAS) in Colombo saw its budget decrease by 10 percent, from \$675,910 to \$608,027 in fiscal year 2016. Given this reduction, the amount of funding available for grants decreased 31 percent, from \$202,510 to \$139,668. Due to the need for greater civil society and youth outreach to contribute to critical mission goals of peace and reconciliation, an increase in the overall budget, which would allow a grants budget of at least \$200,000 is critical. In addition, an increase in training and support for local Sri Lankan public diplomacy professionals is also important so that they can responsibly administer these grants. The budget for PAS Colombo is used for public diplomacy not only in Sri Lanka but also in Maldives, and as such seems low when compared to similar-sized PD operations. We strongly recommend an overall budget increase to roughly \$750,000, which is still well below the median \$1.9 million public diplomacy budgets for U.S. missions worldwide.

### AIM FOR MORE CONSISTENT AMERICAN AND SRI LANKAN STAFFING PATTERNS IN COLOMBO:

Because of the increasingly positive relationship with the Sri Lanka government, the workload for PAS has increased considerably but the staffing has not always kept up. When there are not enough American

PD professionals serving at post, the workflow can break down. We understand that all American vacancies in the PAS have been filled for the remainder of 2016, and that PAS has added a new American public diplomacy position to cover Maldives, which will hopefully sustain in coming years. The new position should be added to the section's permanent staffing for future years.

### ADD AN AMERICAN SPACE IN THE SOUTH:

There are three American Spaces in Sri Lanka – the American Center in Colombo and two American Corners in the northern and central hubs of Kandy and Jaffna. These spaces have facilitated sustained interregional engagement that supports post-war reconciliation. Building upon well-established partnerships with NGOs in the South, the mission hopes to establish a fourth space in Matara, which ACPD strongly supports given that it receives a boost in its budgets for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 or additional funding from IIP. PAS has identified the public library in Matara as the ideal location for the space, as USAID funding following the 2004 tsunami equipped the facility with all necessary amenities. We strongly recommend additional funding to open a fourth American Space in the south.

## OVERVIEW

With the newly elected Sirisena administration, the U.S.-Sri Lanka bilateral relationship has improved considerably, which provides new opportunities for U.S. public diplomacy efforts. The Sri Lankan public underwent considerable trauma for decades. It has been seven years since the Sri Lankan military's defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and nearly 12 years since the 2004 tsunami when more than 35,300 Sri Lankans were killed and more than 1 million affected—the most of the 10 countries affected. President Maithripala Sirisena has consistently articulated the need to be inclusive across religious and ethnic lines to maintain the peace and move the country toward greater progress.

ACPD found a small team facing overwhelming opportunity that is active throughout the country despite a small budget. In May 2015, Secretary Kerry's delivered a speech in Colombo that outlined four areas of U.S. cooperation with Sri Lanka: peace and reconciliation, justice and accountability, advancement of human rights, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. Traditional public diplomacy tools—exchanges, professional development trainings, social and traditional media outreach, and American Spaces—work to support this cooperation. They work actively to empower civil society actors and amplify voices of reconciliation, many of whom are in their impressive network of 2,600 alumni. But meeting these goals also requires a great amount of civil society support, which comes in the form of grants. Given the small amount of funding they have to work with and their inconsistent staffing patterns, the section has done a remarkable job and merits an increase in financial and human resources.

## BUDGET

The public affairs section in Colombo saw its budget decrease by 10 percent, from \$675,910 to \$608,027 in fiscal year 2016. Its highest costs are salaries for local employees, with the next largest amount dedicated to grants to local civil society organizations. In fiscal year 2016, in line with an overall budget decrease, the amount dedicated for grants decreased 31 percent, from \$202,510 to \$139,668. Due to the need for greater civil society and youth outreach to contribute to significant mission goals of peace and reconciliation, an increase in the overall budget, which would allow a grants budget of at least \$200,000, is critical. The budget for PAS Colombo is used for public diplomacy not only in Sri Lanka but also in Maldives, and as such seems low when compared to similar-sized public diplomacy operations. We strongly recommend an overall budget increase to roughly \$750,000, which is still well below the median \$1.9 million public diplomacy budgets for U.S. missions worldwide.

## STAFFING AND TRAINING

Because of the now positive relationship with Sri Lanka, the workload has increased considerably but the staffing has not kept up. When there are not enough American PD professionals serving at post, the workflow can become disrupted. We understand that all American vacancies in PAS have been filled for the remainder of 2016, and that PAS has added a new American public diplomacy position to cover Maldives, which will hopefully sustain in coming years. The new position should be added to the section's permanent staffing for future years.

Grants are the currency for PD programs and the Sri Lankan staff in particular is requesting more consistent grants training to keep up with frequent changes in processes and rules from Washington. They rightly worry about the need to monitor potential abuse and whether or not they are properly trained to do so. ACPD recommends consistent regional training opportunities for them to be proper stewards of U.S. taxpayer dollars. An increase in training and support for local Sri Lankan public diplomacy professionals will help them continue to responsibly administer these grants.

We understand that a contact management database was rolled out at post last year, but implementation has been slow and the database is not utilized by all sections. There is need for an evaluation as to whether this is the best database to better track the alumni network and potential candidates for exchanges, especially the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). If so, it should be implemented and used by all sections. If not, post should look at other options. Due to a high level of turnover among American staff, consistent use of a transparent database would improve communication between the economic, political and public diplomacy local and American staff.

## EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The Public Affairs Section facilitates core ECA programs such as IVLP, Fulbright and Humphrey programs, English Access, English Language Fellows, e-Teacher program, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and the Community Solutions Program. There have been 2,600 Sri Lankan alumni who have been part of U.S. exchanges since 1952, 79 of whom have been added in the last year. Post provides skills training and opportunities for them via an Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) grant for the Federating Women Entrepreneur Associations in Sri Lanka, which creates a platform for regional women entrepreneurial associations to collectively support and amplify the role of women entrepreneurs in the country. Another AEIF grant with C-Span creates an online repository of parliamentary sessions and select forums and conferences where public policy is discussed in Sri Lanka.

PAS also facilitates a considerable amount of engagement activities focused on entrepreneurship, the environment, English language education, STEM, and cultural

performances. These include a speaker program on environmental conservation for university students and the public; science education programs for youth and a citizen scientist water testing project; English language training for pre-service and in-service teachers, in addition to members of the public; and art exhibitions and performances.

In late 2015, Embassy Colombo hosted U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power, who spoke about the importance of inclusiveness in government and society to a town hall for students and young civil society activists. PAS Colombo has also hosted multiple visits by Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski, and arranged and facilitated a policy speech for Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon. In June, PAS welcomed Tanya Somanader, White House Director of Digital Rapid Response, who led a series of workshops on Right to Information (RTI). Her meetings with high level government officials proved influential in convincing the government to sign on to the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multilateral initiative to make governments more transparent, shortly after her visit. Most recently PAS organized several entrepreneurship-focused speaker visits. In July, IIP expert speaker Samira Cook Gaines, the Chief of Economic Empowerment for the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC), returned to Sri Lanka following the high turnout during her last visit in September 2015. Post also brought three American venture capitalists to participate in the Information and Communication Technology Agency's (ICTA) "Disrupt Asia" investor forum. The visits were part of an ongoing public diplomacy campaign to support innovation and entrepreneurship across the country.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH**

The U.S. Embassy in Colombo has an impressive social media presence in an increasingly wired and connected Sri Lanka. PAS manages four platforms for U.S. Embassy Colombo's outreach: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/colombo.usembassy>), which has more than 127,000 followers; Twitter (<https://twitter.com/USEmbSL>) which has 54,000 followers; YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/USEmbassySrilanka>); Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembassycolombo/>); and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/usembsl/>), which has 550 followers. The U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka also has a Twitter page with more than 4,000 followers (<https://twitter.com/USAmbKeshap>).

Much of the content is generated in Sri Lanka. The PAS uses IIP campaign material that resonates with Sri Lankans, most specifically material on Black History Month and World Press Freedom Day, but also the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Summit, LGBTI Pride Month, material

on the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP21), and the #16 days of activism against gender based violence campaign. It would be helpful to have more ShareAmerica content on peace and reconciliation and disaster preparedness, given that those are major mission goals that public diplomacy activities particularly support.

## **AMERICAN SPACES: COLOMBO AND KANDY**

There are three American Spaces in Sri Lanka – Colombo, Kandy and Jaffna. The Colombo space is in the old U.S. chancery, where the Public Affairs Section staff is also based. It offers a range of programming targeted towards youth, especially on technology and entrepreneurship. The priority American Space in Kandy, in central Sri Lanka, recently received \$600,000 from IIP to undergo a renovation. It is now an inviting, dynamic space for Sri Lankans to learn English and receive technology and entrepreneurship training. PAS promotes programs that connect the spaces and the Youth Forums (see below). The American Center in Colombo offers regular management workshops and coding classes, while the American Corner in Kandy regularly hosts business English and entrepreneurship incubator courses. In the coming months, both American Spaces will be equipped with Maker Space technologies and programs, including 3D printers and basic programming devices to inspire and promote innovation. The American Space in Jaffna, in the north, is a partnership with a local NGO. The mission is also contemplating a fourth space in southern Sri Lanka, which ACPD strongly supports, particularly if PAS receives a boost in its budgets for fiscal years 2017 and FY 2018 and can engage southern Sri Lankans in a more sustained way.

## **ENGAGING YOUTH**

The Youth Forum is a leadership development program for Sri Lankan youth who use the American Spaces as a gathering point. They include young persons of all ethnicities and faiths—Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians. They complete projects that call attention to issues not normally covered by the mainstream news media, such as the environment, small business successes, women's empowerment issues, and local peace-building projects. Recent PAS initiatives to engage youth include an interregional youth cricket tournament in Matara, which brought together teams from Jaffna, Kandy, and Matara for three days of matches, service projects, and reconciliation-focused programs. The American Center and American Spaces have also recently hosted visiting speakers who encouraged innovation, entrepreneurship, and other youth-empowering skills.