

"He had compassion for them because they were troubled and helpless"


Matthew 9:36



Pashayi

The Pashayi (also spelled Pashai), whose population is nearing one million, live in the valleys of the Hindu Kush mountain range north and east of the capital, Kabul. The rugged Pashayi often call themselves Kohistanis, meaning "mountain people." Though the people in these mountain valleys are collectively called Pashayi, there are actually at least four languages spoken among them. These are not slight dialectical differences, but distinct languages that are sometimes mutually unintelligible even by other Pashayi!

Most Pashayi families earn their livelihoods from herding or farming crops such as rice at lower elevations and wheat and maize at higher elevations, as well as from selling dried fruits and nuts.



A tribal people led by village councils, the Pashayi have a rich oral tradition of songs and folklore. With their songs telling their stories, one tradition is for young Pashayi to travel from village to village each year at harvest time singing newly composed songs and telling new stories from their culture. Imagine a day when the stories being told and the songs being sung spring from hearts made alive by God's grace!



Quick Facts

**Population = approximately
800,000**

**Progress = Unreached
Language = At least 4 distinct
Pashai languages (not
dialects)**

**Bible Translation, Gospel
Recordings = Not Available
Jesus Film = Not Available**

Engage



Living as they do in isolated mountain valleys away from large cities, the conservative Pashayi are among the most untouched in Afghanistan by globalization and modernization. Many Pashayi are suspicious of the urban trends they hear about. Outsiders, even Afghans from other provinces, cannot enter Pashayi communities without an invitation – and they are rarely invited. As tight-knit, “fishbowl” communities, news of Pashayi-focused work will travel fast, even if the work is in cities

among diaspora Pashayi. Those who associate with foreigners can, by doing so, endanger themselves and their clans.

A team focused on the Pashayi will need to think creatively about how to counter the fear that foreigners come to proselytize, ruin the morality of the people, and advance other governments' political and military agendas. The team's public work could include offering services for which the Pashayi have a felt need. Examples could include agricultural development; exporting nuts and dried fruits; providing medical services such as clinics, community health training and medical worker training, and educational opportunities such as teacher training or minority language primary instruction

Effective gospel ministry should avoid foreign-associated (especially Western) vocabulary, behavior, and forms. Evangelism and discipleship may best be done through ‘shadow discipling,’ that is, training Pashayi in Kabul who then take God’s good news to Pashayi homelands, where foreigners may never be able to go and share openly. At the same time, since the Taliban came into power in the summer of 2021, there may in fact be more open doors to remote and conservative areas of the country, thereby increasing access to the Pashayi and engagement with them.



Pray

- Ask the Lord to raise up and thrust out workers who will go and share Christ with the Pashayi of Afghanistan.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften and prepare the hearts of the Pashayi towards believers so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord for key connections with Pashayi in Kabul and other urban areas.

Is God calling you to take the gospel to the Pashayi of Afghanistan?
Contact us. We would love to help you get there!