

Skateistan: To live and skate Kabul

By: Grain Media (2011)

URL: <http://vimeo.com/32234310>

Length: 9.16 min.

Key words: Afghanistan, play, discrimination, children

SUMMARY

This documentary shows boys and girls in war-torn Kabul, Afghanistan, skateboarding as a hobby. This opportunity is provided by Skateistan, an international NGO. In this video we meet some of the children benefitting from the program, watch them play, and view the streets of Kabul.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your overall impressions of the impact of war in Kabul and Afghanistan after seeing this video?
2. Do you think programs like Skateistan can help build a lasting peace in Afghanistan? If so, how?
3. What qualities do you think the children are learning from skateboarding that benefits their community now? How will this experience change who they become as adults? Could the children's skateboarding experience make a real difference to their country in the long term?
4. Not everyone agrees with girls skateboarding. Do you think that international NGOs should be providing activities that do not conform with local values and norms?
5. One boy says that when the Taliban were there things were bad but at least there was peace. Benjamin Franklin once wrote that there is no such thing as a "bad peace." What do you think?

BACKGROUND

1979. The Soviet Union invades to prop up the Afghan Communist government against an anti-government rebellion by mujahadeen forces

1989. Soviet Union withdraws from Afghanistan

1992. Civil war begins

1996-2001. The Taliban take control of Kabul and most of the country. The Taliban are extremists who introduce a hard-line version of Islam.

2001-present. After September 11 terrorist attacks on the US, the US and allied forces attack Afghanistan in the belief that Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden is hiding there. The Taliban government is quickly overthrown, but keep fighting.

Population: 33 million (July 2009 est.)

Main exports: fruits and nuts, carpets, wool, cotton, opium

GDP per capita: US \$956

Religion: Muslim >99%

Literacy: men - 23%; women - 10%.



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[Shreddin' in Yemen: Meet the skaters of Sanaa.](#) Toronto Star (May 12, 2012)

[War-weary Afghan children long for peace, schooling.](#) Xinhua News. (June 1, 2012)

[Afghanistan: Girl Power.](#) Al Jazeera. (May 17, 2012)

[Afghanistan – Timeline.](#) BBC News.

[NATO to hand combat role to Afghans as it seeks way out of war.](#) Reuters. (May 20, 2012)

Skateistan <http://skateistan.org/>

Right to Play. <http://www.righttoplay.com/International/about-us/Pages/mission.aspx>

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