



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# UNESCO Kabul Newsletter

UNESCO Kabul Newsletter,

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## Reconciliation through Cultural Interaction

### In brief:

The UNESCO Kabul team seeks to contribute to peace building in Afghanistan by promoting cultural interaction, cross-cultural awareness and cultural diversity.

The International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures provides a good platform for people to nurture peace through cross-cultural understanding and respect for diversity.

The UNESCO Kabul team focuses its efforts to empower Afghan people through quality education, cultural dialogue and the free and



School children in Kabul advocate for peace

transparent flow of information in various programmes concerned with policy development and operational projects. We believe that an informed and educated population can contribute actively to nourish sustainable peace. To this end, we assist the Afghan Ministry of Education to fight against illiteracy and develop a strategic roadmap to improve the quality and ease of access to education across the country.

The International Year for the Rapprochement of Culture bears one single message for every one of us:

the difference in cultural values should not be considered a matter of conflict, while it paves the way for complementary cooperation within nations and societies.

*Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director UNESCO Kabul and UNESCO Representative to Afghanistan*

The United Nations has announced 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (IYRC) to promote the notion of peace around the world using dialogue and interaction among cultures.

The IYRC celebration in 2010 is in line with UNESCO's universal mandate to promote peace building through cultural diversity. We can achieve a sustainable peace once a culture of tolerance and dialogues are firmly entrenched, which is dependent on cultural interaction based on mutual respect.

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# Safeguarding the Bamiyan World Heritage Site

## In brief:

The 8<sup>th</sup> Working Group meeting held in Germany in late March 2010. The Afghan Government Representatives, UNESCO and Conservation Experts from around the world discussed on how to further conservation process of the World Heritage Site of Bamiyan. The recommendations from the Expert Working Group meeting are currently being finalized and will be available [online](#) shortly

The 8th Expert Working Group for the Preservation of the Bamiyan site was held in Munich, Germany in March 2010 at the Munich Technical University in cooperation with ICOMOS Germany. The meeting was attended by over 50 participants and

observers from the Afghan Government, UNESCO and the international community. A range of important issues were discussed, including the necessary steps to be taken to further address site security, the stability of the Giant Buddha niches and fragments, the conservation of mural paintings and archaeological sites in Bamiyan, and the further elaboration and implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and Management Plan for all the Bamiyan World Heritage areas.

Since the destruction of the 6-7<sup>th</sup> century giant Buddha sculptures of Bamiyan in March 2001, international organizations have come together with the Afghan authorities in an emergency effort to safeguard the remains of this invaluable Afghan heritage. In 2003, the cultural

landscape of Bamiyan was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and simultaneously placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Since then, thanks to generous grants through the UNESCO - Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of World Cultural Heritage, UNESCO has undertaken three phases of a major project for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley.

The Afghan Government participated fully in this coordination meeting (representatives of both the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ministry of Urban Development, as well as the Governor of Bamiyan) and consensus has been achieved on the need to focus on emergency measures to safeguard the site and ensure the sustainability of the heritage values for which it was inscribed on the List. Further technical interventions are still required to ensure the continued preservation of the site and in order to remove the site from the List in Danger and to ensure long-term conservation.

The recommendations from the Expert Working Group meeting are currently being finalized and will be available [online](#) shortly.



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Participants to the 8<sup>th</sup> Working Group Meeting for the Preservation of the Bamiyan World Heritage Site in Munich Germany

# News and program update

## New project on Educational Radio and Television of Afghanistan

A new project entitled, “Development of (ERTV) for audio-visual support to teacher training in Afghanistan”, was initiated on 17 February 2010 to further capacity development of the Educational Radio and Television of Afghanistan, ERTV.

The project (approximately USD 1 million) is funded by the Government of Italy to build on the previously joint UNESCO-Italy project which ended in December 2008. The main goal of this new initiative is to help ERTV with the process of raising production quality in broadcasting of educational materials as the only radio and TV in the country mandated for educational programming.

One of the main components of the project is to strengthen the “distance education” initiative as a priority of the Afghan Ministry of Education to access to remote and inaccessible rural areas. ERTV will play a leading role in promoting distance education by producing educational materials and furthering broadcasting capacity.



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## Launch of the second phase of Enhancement of Literacy

### Afghanistan (ELA 2)

On 9 March 2010 UNESCO and the Afghan Ministry of Education launched the second phase of the programme for ‘Enhancement of Literacy in

Afghanistan( ELA 2)’ with US \$19.3 million provided by the Government of Japan. “Illiteracy is a main obstacle in the way of development and progress in Afghanistan. The country suffers from a 74 percent adult illiteracy rate, one of the highest in the world” said Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, UNESCO Kabul Director at the opening ceremony.

Along with the first phase of ELA which started in late 2008, the programme will provide a nine month literacy course to 600,000 adults out of which 60 percent will be women. In addition, the project provides skills development and income-generation programmes to selected neo-literates, so that they will be able to sustain their newly acquired literacy skills and improve their livelihoods



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Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, UNESCO Kabul Director, (R), Mr. Farooq Wardak the Afghan Minister of Education, (C), and Mr. Shigeyuki Hiroki, Ambassador of Japan to Afghanistan (L) at the signing ceremony of the new project in Kabul.

# Working for Education

## In brief:

UNESCO has assisted the Afghan Government since 2002 to rehabilitate the education system and to develop the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) and the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP), to strategize and coordinate the education related activities of different stakeholders with the leadership of the Afghan Ministry of Education. Education is one of the sectors which is badly affected by the longstanding years of conflict in Afghanistan. According to the Afghan Ministry of Education, 60% of school age children are still out of school based on reasons which include poverty and inaccessibility.

Ahmad Ali, a teenager who despite many obstacles has pursued his studies and remains hopeful for the future as he says "I want to study law; through law I can help my family and my society to become aware of their rights. The right to education is one of those main rights that I will advocate for".

**B**ecoming educated is what everyone aims for. However, it is a considerable challenge for those who live in developing countries affected by longstanding war. Ahmad Ali, 17, is an Afghan teenager who has struggled to get an education. Seven years ago, Ahmad Ali was studying in Grade 5 at the only available school in his village in Miramor, a district of Daikundi province - one of the least developed and most inaccessible provinces in

Afghanistan. He spent two hours walking each way to school for a two hours class. "We had a so- called school; there was no building and we had only a few torn tents under which we sat on the ground", Ahmad Ali recalls.

"I didn't feel like I was learning very much. Our teacher was an old man and he had only studied up to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade himself. I was dreaming of a good school where I could learn more. I negotiated with my family to allow me to go to a school in Kabul."

Ahmad Ali left his village, Spuk, when he was 10. For the first time coming to Kabul, Ahmad Ali

settled at one of his father's relatives who was running an English and Computer course. He started going to school in the morning and in the afternoon he worked at the school as a cleaner until the evening. Ahmad Ali could use the place as his accommodation and that meant a lot to him.

"The first days were tough and everything was new to me, such as the school environment and the Kabuli accent. Sometimes some of my classmates made fun of me and the way I spoke.

However, things became better with time. I also missed my family and had to work all afternoon. I also had to take care of the



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Ahmad Ali works in a tailoring shop in Kabul after his school to meet his expenses and save money for his family.

household jobs, such as making my own food, washing my cloths and cleaning the small room where I was sleeping”.

After a year Ahmad Ali found a tailoring shop to work in and that accommodated him. Ahmad Ali worked 8 hours a day after school as an Assistant Tailor and made around \$4 USD a week. “It was hardly enough for my expenses, but I appreciated it as I could stay there free of charge”. Despite having almost no time to do his homework, Ahmad Ali tried to keep on track and his grades at school were promising. Ahmad Ali’s main motive despite all his difficulties in life was to obtain an education. “The only reason that my family faces poverty is because my parents are illiterate. I want to get educated in order to be able to help my

family and my community”.

Now Ahmad Ali is in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and has learnt tailoring well enough to be a tailor. His income is higher and he feels more comfortable than he did when he first arrived in Kabul. “Now I am used to being away from my family and living on my own. Only one more year is left to complete high school and that is a big step towards my dream.”

“My father is old and I have 3 brothers and 2 sisters who are younger than me. I will now be able to take care of my family in Daikundi”.

Ahmad Ali wants to pursue his studies at university. “I want to study law, through law I can help my family and my society to become aware of their rights. The right to education is

those main rights that I will advocate for”.

Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, tremendous achievements have been made in the sector of education. More than 6 million Afghan children are now going to school with about 34% of them being girls. However, many challenges remain.

By recognizing the fact that the education is the foundation of development, UNESCO has assisted the Afghan Government since 2002 to rehabilitate the education system and to develop the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) and the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP), to strategize and coordinate the education related activities of different stakeholders with the leadership of the Afghan Ministry of Education. Our overall aim is to remove as many of the obstacles as possible to quality education that young people such as Ahmad Ali have to face on a daily basis in order to support Afghanistan to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals.



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# The Cultural capital of Islamic World in 2013 needs conservation

## In brief:

Ghazni, a historical city in southern Afghanistan was nominated as the capital of Islamic culture for 2013 by the Islamic Cultural Educational and Scientific Organization (ISESCO).

Insecurity is a major challenge nowadays in Ghazni, however, UNESCO and the Afghan Government are trying to do whatever they can to preserve the historical monuments in Ghazni and make it ready to celebrate the 2013 as the capital of the Islamic culture.

**G**hazni, located south-west of Kabul, was announced by the Islamic Cultural Educational and Scientific Organization (ISESCO) as the capital of Islamic culture for

2013. Ghazni has a history as a thriving center for Islamic art and culture during the Ghaznavid period and also dating back to Buddhist times in Afghanistan. Being affected by long years of neglect and insecurity, Ghazni's monumental heritage is in a state of urgent need of conservation.

The UNESCO Kabul Office has been in the process of restoring the Museum of Islamic art and pre-Islamic art of Ghazni since 2003. The deteriorating security situation has hampered and delayed activities, but efforts and progress continue to be made towards the goal of 2013 for the Museum of Islamic Art. With technical assistance from UNESCO, the Department of Historical Monuments of the Ministry of Information and Culture has taken the lead in efforts to re-establish museums in

Ghazni to help raise-awareness of the history of the region. "This ISESCO declaration for Ghazni can be a great milestone for Afghanistan to reach and for the people of Ghazni in particular. Ghazni has a rich cultural heritage and with proper attention to conservation and sustainable management of that heritage, the history and traditions of the area can become both a source of cultural pride for the people as well as creating opportunities for jobs and sustainable development.", said Mr. Brendan Cassar, UNESCO Kabul Culture Programme Specialist.

According to Mr. Abdul Ahad Abbasi, the Historical Monuments Department Director of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Ghazni is a priority for the Ministry and the Government of Afghanistan. "It is a great occasion for the Afghan people that the

historic city of Ghazni is announced as the cultural capital of the Islamic world in 2013. This reminds the world of the fact that Afghanistan was once the culture center of the region



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The tomb of Hakim Sana'i Ghaznavi, the famous Persian Poet of 11<sup>th</sup> Century in Ghazni

# Language can contribute to peace building in Afghanistan



Mr. Abdul Satar Purdeli- the Baluchi Language Advocate and member of Regional Studies Center in Kabul

## In brief:

Afghanistan is a multicultural, multiethnic and multi-lingual country. Currently there are about 30 languages spoken across Afghanistan, some with only a few speakers. Dari and Pashto are the two official languages which are spoken by about 80% of the population.

Baluchi is one of the minor languages in Afghanistan which is mostly spoken in the south-eastern province of Nimrooz by Baluch people. Mr. Purdeli is a Baluchi language advocate in Afghanistan who shares his ideas about the Baluchi language.

The International Mother Language

Day on 21 February provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of mother languages, especially for minority languages. Afghanistan's Constitution explicitly

mentions that in any region where the majority of the population speaks any languages other than Dari and Pashto, that language should remain as the third official language of the region.

Afghanistan is a multi-linguistic country, where in addition to two official languages of Dari and Pashto, 30 other minority languages exist - most of them are seriously at the risk of becoming

extinct. Baluchi is one of the minor languages in Afghanistan which is

spoken mainly in the south eastern province of Nimrooz and in some other provinces across the country.

In 2009, UNESCO supported facilitation of a symposium on the theme of Baluchi language to draw attention on supporting Baluchi and other local languages in Afghanistan. One of the main contributors to this symposium and advocate for the Baluchi language in Afghanistan is Mr. Abdul Satar Purdeli, a Baluch who currently works at the Regional Studies Center in Kabul.

Mr. Purdeli believes that facilitating such a symposium to support languages is vital to promoting the rights of minorities to speak in their mother tongue. "In the context of

Afghanistan, any intervention on supporting languages will contribute to peace building and reconciliation, since many conflicts in our country have an ethnic and linguistic nature. We should thereby try to use the linguistic diversity as means for negotiation and unity", said Mr. Purdeli. As Mr. Purdeli states, important steps have been taken thus far to support the minority languages of Afghanistan, and it is hoped that all the minority languages will be preserved for future generations. "A lot of Baluch people who have migrated to other provinces in past years have adopted either Dari or Pashto as their main means of communication and also their children study at school in either Dari or Pashto. This needs to be changed and Baluch children should have the opportunity to learn in their own mother tongue", says Mr. Purdeli. The Afghan Ministry of Education has started preparing school text books in 6 minority languages to be taught in their relevant regions across Afghanistan, the step which is appealing to Mr. Purdeli and those who are concerned about the existence of languages in Afghanistan



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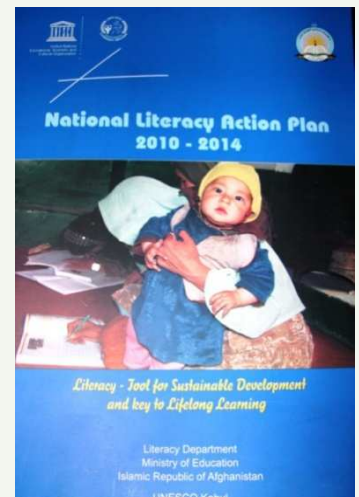
*The ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have often broken in to war*

Preamble to UNESCO Constitution

## UNESCO Kabul publication

The National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) is published by the Afghan Ministry of Education with technical/financial support from UNESCO in close consultation with the LIFE partners as a road map for achievement of the literacy goals set in the NESP II (2010-2014). The NLAP is envisaged as providing the government, donors and all other literacy stakeholders with a common vision, guiding principles and a sound national strategy that lays out a general framework necessary for the effective implementation of literacy programmes and plans.

The NLAP is published in English, Dari and Pashto languages.



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UNESCO Kabul is working along the Afghan Government to promote peace, through culture, education, communication and information. We are working to nurture peace in the minds of people.

Please share you feedback and comments to:

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