

# VOICES



United Nations  
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Meet the new  
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Director

Kazakhstan

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Kyrgyz labour migrants en route to Sverdlovsk, Russia.



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# Aiming for the Stars

2009 is the UNESCO International Year of Astronomy.

This special year encourages young people in particular to discover the universe and broaden their interest in science.

The main events spanning the Year are the "Dark Skies Awareness" project to preserve and protect dark night skies in places such as urban cultural landscapes, national parks and sites connected with astronomical observations and "Astronomy and World Heritage" with the objective to establish a link between science and culture by acknowledging the cultural and scientific value of objects, places and buildings connected with astronomy.

The Year coincides with the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first observations with an astronomical telescope.

For details, access: [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=44402&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=44402&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)



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## Dying languages mapped by UNESCO

UNESCO has published an interactive electronic version of its Atlas of the *World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing* which catalogues some 2,500 endangered languages worldwide.

It ranks the dying languages according to five levels: unsafe; definitely endangered; severely endangered; critically endangered; and extinct. Data shows that out of the 6,000 languages currently in existence, over 200 have died out over the last three generations, 538 are critically endangered, 502

severely endangered, 632 definitely endangered and 607 unsafe.

More than 30 linguists worked on the Atlas, which highlights how the phenomenon of disappearing languages is evident in every region and in varying economic conditions.

The updated atlas can be supplemented, corrected and updated based on user contributions. Access to the digital Atlas: [www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages](http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages)

## Design a logo for the Memory of the World

UNESCO invites the submission of a new logo design that best corresponds to the mandate of the Memory of the World (MOW) Programme to promote, protect and preserve the world's documentary heritage.

The winner of this international contest, which is open to all, will be announced by the 10th session on the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee in July 2009 and will receive a monetary award of US\$ 2,000. The winner will also be featured in a special news item on the Memory of the World website. All rights for the selected logo will be held exclusively by UNESCO.

For more details, access: [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=28318&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28318&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

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# Secondary schools surge

## EXPANSION POSES PROBLEMS OVER REGIONAL ACCESS AND QUALITY

By Miki Nozawa, UNESCO Bangkok

Private tutoring is a growth industry even in countries that can least afford it, according to a regional Secondary Education Policy Seminar, jointly organized by Nagoya University's Graduate School of International Development and UNESCO Bangkok.

Excessive expansion of private tutoring, evolving into a "shadow" education system for secondary students, is not new in high income nations like Japan and South Korea. However, the flourishing after hours cram schools in low income countries like Lao PDR and Nepal is a growing issue debated in the seminar held in Japan last November.

Funded by UNESCO, Nagoya University in Japan and the Japanese government, the seminar brought together senior ministry officials in charge of secondary education and academics from nine countries across the region, to discuss vital policy issues in secondary education development.

In Asia in the 1960s, only a small portion of the adult population completed secondary school: just 17 per cent in Korea, 10 per cent in Malaysia and seven per cent in Thailand, according to a UNESCO regional study on secondary education and teachers. Since then, many countries, especially in East Asia, have made spectacular progress

in expanding access to secondary education, although at a different pace. Asia today comprises countries that can be broadly categorized in four groups by different features of their economy, as well as different stages of secondary education development.

There is a group of high income countries that include Japan, Korea and other "Asian Tigers" such as Hong Kong and Singapore where universal secondary education has been achieved.

Second is a group of medium income countries, such as China, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam, that are striving towards secondary education for all. They have achieved high enrolment rates at the lower secondary level but still have to work out how to expand upper secondary education, with less than 60 per cent of eligible children enrolled.

Another group consists of low income countries, including Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Nepal. With less than half of secondary school aged children enrolled, their challenge is to expand secondary education and boost enrolment. However, they are moving towards lower secondary education for all by including lower secondary education as part of basic and compulsory education.

Lastly, there is a group of countries with transition economies, notably in Central Asia, that have had high enrolment rates. They are concerned about widening inequalities between urban and rural, and among different income levels. The seminar revealed that the rapid expansion of secondary education had

brought about new types of challenges that countries have to cope with.

While many developing countries are still struggling to improve access to disadvantaged populations, the secondary education system is steadily moving from elitist to mass schooling. This means that the system deals increasingly with diverse groups of students and needs.

For example, in Lao PDR, more children from poor families or ethnic minority groups, are included in the system.

Diversification of the content of secondary education often happens when secondary schooling moves from a highly selective institution to mass education. It does this by promoting technical and vocational education pathways allowing part of the school curriculum to adjust to local needs.

Quality of learning has also become a major policy concern. More effort is being made to measure learning outcomes by conducting national assessments. These assessments help us to better understand how much students have learnt at school and what the gaps are.

A worrying finding, as revealed in the Programme for International Student Assessment, conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD), is that students in non-OECD countries, such as Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand, are more likely to figure in the lowest achievement levels.

Concerns over quality and relevance of secondary education are not only restricted to developing countries. Japan and South Korea, top performers in international assessments, face an issue of declining motivation to learn among youngsters.

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# Science camp success

FUN WORKSHOP  
ADDRESSES  
WANING INTEREST  
IN DISCIPLINE

By Teresa Diez, UNESCO Phnom Penh

Who says science is boring?

At least 52 students from eight Asia-Pacific countries at the UNESCO Regional Science and Technology camp didn't think so.

"I like it when I can learn by myself," said Dalaphone Phengrattana, from Lao PDR, while observing how a robot moves and scoops a ping pong ball, at the camp held recently in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

During the nine-day event, the students aged 12-to-15-years-old from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Timor Leste, participated in a wide range of hands-on workshops, where they learnt about practical applications of science and technology and engineering.

The students discovered how friction affects motion, how to convert a rotation movement and basic walking mechanisms of animals through the use of a walker robot.

Regarding renewable energy, topics included how to build a solar car, how to convert solar energy into electrical energy, and then into mechanical energy to move a motor. Students also built a windmill and a watermill and used wind energy to produce mechanical energy. During the "Scavenger" workshop, they learnt how to design a working robot.

"I liked constructing the robot," said Hamirul Anak Belitang from Brunei.

"When I worked on the robot, I learnt something new and my knowledge became bigger and bigger."

The camp also encouraged interaction between youth of different nationalities and promoted collaboration and mutual understanding among countries in the region, linking science, culture and education.



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© UNESCO/ Chanthul Suos

Dalaphone, from Lao PDR, said she enjoyed working with students from different countries.

"We talked and ate together and became good friends," she said. The camp also raised awareness on the importance of human resource development and investing in the younger generation, while developing a hands-on science curricula in educational systems in South-East Asia.

The event was part of a comprehensive approach to "Strengthening Science and Technology Literacy in Asia".

Science and technology is the cornerstone which enables nations to attain sustainable development and cope with the increasing challenges of development related issues, such as climate change, natural resource

management and disaster preparedness. Therefore, countries must have a strong science and technology base which includes human resource capacity to overcome all these pressures.

Despite this fact, young people nowadays are generally losing interest in science or technology courses, or entering technical and scientific fields.

This is prevalent in South-East Asian countries, where a lack of financial resources, curriculum development experience and technical skills, is having a detrimental effect on expertise in the scientific field.

Following on from the inaugural science and technology camp held in Brunei Darussalam in December 2006, the Phnom Penh event backed the claim that the only way to initiate a wind of change in the science sector is through greater regional cooperation between countries, involving the private, non-governmental and intergovernmental sectors.

The camp was organized in late February and early March by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Kingdom of Cambodia and the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Financial backing was provided by Japanese Funds-in-Trust, JICA, Lego Education, the University of Indonesia and Tokyo Institute of Technology.

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# E-learning opens new opportunities

## INNOVATIVE USE OF ICT IN EDUCATION PUSHES BOUNDARIES

By Lay Cheng Tan, UNESCO Bangkok

Fuelled by information sourced through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) about a world beyond their classrooms, students are full of hope for their future.

Nehal Nayani, a student at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Public School in Hyderabad, India, wants to be a football player but is also open to a career in art design, architecture and astronomy after learning about these different careers while conducting online research for his school projects.

A fellow student Sarin Ann Mathew emphatically declares: "I want to be a software engineer. ICT is my base..."

As students of the 21st Century, they are the beneficiaries of the innovative use of ICT in education.

"The new e-learning has opened up my eyes to new possibilities for the future," said Chia Yik Meng from the Sekolah

Menengah Kebangsaan Seksyen 5 Wangsa Maju school in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"I want to be an engineer...there are many areas in engineering that involve computers and ICT."

Their voices echo in a video, *A Journey of Hope: A New Way of Learning through ICT in Education*, co-produced by UNESCO Bangkok and Intel Semiconductor Ltd. It is part of UNESCO Bangkok's Innovative Practices in ICT in Education Project, sponsored by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust.

The video features interviews with principals, teachers and students from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Public School and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seksyen 5 Wangsa Maju.

The schools were selected because their teachers were awarded certificates of commendation under the UNESCO ICT in Education Innovation Awards in 2007/2008 for using ICT innovatively in teaching their students.

The teachers attributed their success to the training they received from the Intel® Teach Program, a research-based programme instructing K-12 teachers to integrate ICT tools and resources into their lessons.

Working with local governments, the Intel® Teach Program has trained more than five million teachers in over 40 countries.

*A Journey of Hope* is targeted at government officials, educators, school principals, teachers, parents and the general public. It is a short and useful visual tool to demonstrate that integrating ICT into education systems can increase the quality of education and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of planned educational outcomes.

As Somarupa Sahoo from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Public School said: "Whatever we want to become and whatever we are going to do in the future, everything depends on education."

The video highlights the impact of using ICT in the classrooms, showing how teachers and students became more engaged in teaching and learning processes with the help of ICT.

It also underlines how a strong and positive support from the heads of schools can encourage the teachers to be more innovative in planning and delivering their lesson plans.

For a copy of the video, contact: [ictinfo@unesco.org](mailto:ictinfo@unesco.org) or [lc.tan@unesco.org](mailto:lc.tan@unesco.org).



# Sombhon's story is an inspiration for all



©UNESCO/ Elina Pietilä

By Elina Pietilä, UNESCO Bangkok

Poor children from minority groups are often those with the least chance of going to school and therefore face a major struggle in directing their own future.

Sombhon Sansathian's inspirational story proves that a good education, in a safe environment, can provide an opportunity for a more sustainable future, just as it has for her.

Sombhon's childhood was very tough. The little Karen girl from Mae Hong Son, Thailand, lost her mother when she was four. To make matters worse, her father was addicted to drugs and she suffered from malnutrition.

When she was nine, Sombhon's life drastically changed for the better as she found sanctuary in the "Bethlehem Home", a children's refuge in Mae Hong Son run by a small NGO.

Each child in the home is cared for by a godparent, which enables poor rural children to live in a safe environment and attend school.

The home provided a safe haven for Sombhon and a brighter future, resulting in her graduation from Chiang Mai's Rajabhat University with a bachelor's degree in physical education.

Sombhon, 26, is now the manager of

a home for 60 poor hill tribe children in Mae Rim, Chiang Mai.

This has given her the opportunity to make a difference to the lives of other minority children and be part of creating a better and more sustainable future for generations to come.

Education that underlies sustainability is education for the future. A change in one person's life can lead to a bigger, positive communal and societal transformation.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an approach to teaching and learning that encourages students and teachers to assume responsibility for creating a more sustainable future.

Globally, the number of people who have received an education has increased greatly in the past few decades.

According to the *2009 Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, there were 28 million fewer out-of-school children in 2006, compared to 2000.

Enrolment in secondary education is rising. According to UNESCO figures, 513 million students were enrolled in secondary schools in 2006, an increase of nearly 76 million since 1999.

However, many challenges still need to be addressed, both locally and globally, in order to create a sustainable future for generations to come.

In the midst of these challenges - conflicts, climate change and the current global economic crisis - ESD looks to the future.

It engages with crucial issues such as sustainable livelihoods, gender equality and ensures the use and viability of indigenous knowledge.

It also attempts to constitute a comprehensive approach to education and learning.

"The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development - Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade," held in Bonn, Germany, at the end of March this year provided an opportunity to share experiences and views on ESD from around the world.

The conference gave 700 delegates, including ministers of education, the opportunity to examine the impact that the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) is having.

It also provided them with an opportunity to discuss the educational answers that ESD can provide in response to emerging global challenges.

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## Investigation underway into female teachers' role

By Ashima Kapur, UNESCO Bangkok

A regional policy research project on the quality and status of female teachers and their impact on Education for All (EFA) in Asia has been officially launched by UNESCO Bangkok, Ochanomizu University in Japan and the Korean Institute of Gender Equality Promotion and Education (KIGEPE), Republic of Korea.

Given the critical role that female teachers play in not only promoting girls' education, but also mainstreaming gender equality in education and in society as a whole, the research will focus on the issue of female teachers in South-East, East and South Asian countries.

The project is one of the main follow-up recommendations of the Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA), held in Tokyo, Japan in 2007 on the theme of linking research and policy to promote gender equality in education, which was also jointly organized with Ochanomizu University.

GENIA is a network of gender focal points in ministries of education across Asia to share information and lessons on

gender and education. It was initiated by UNESCO Bangkok to strengthen the national capacities in gender mainstreaming in EFA and to achieve EFA goal 5: promote gender equality in education.

As the first step, a regional planning workshop was held in March, in Bangkok, to discuss details of the research.

Its purpose was to introduce the basic framework and concept of the research project to the four participating countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Mongolia, and to jointly discuss and agree on the common strategy for implementation of the research work.

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## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

# News reporting course hits the headlines

By Shahiduzzaman,  
News Network Bangladesh

Bangladesh has some of the liveliest newspapers in Asia. So it is not surprising that the training of journalists contributes to the quality and fearless reporting of the press.

Recently, the first batch of 25 Bangladeshi journalists in Barisal Divisional City completed News Network's one-month-long training and motivational programme for the capacity building of young journalists. Funded by IPDC (International Programme for the Development of Communication) and UNESCO New Delhi, the programme sought to raise the journalists' skills and level of understanding of "sensible" journalism.

"Eighty five per cent of news comes from rural Bangladesh but nobody is serious about the development of rural journalists," said Syed Dulal, Editor of the Bangla language daily *Ajker Paribartan*.

The training focused on report writing, editing and techniques of information gathering, news-feature writing and making the journalists aware about sensible journalism and human rights. The president of the local press club, SM Iqbal, said the month-long training was a first for Barisal division and that other rural areas should not be forgotten either. This year, 75 journalists in Barisal,

Sylhet and Rajshahi will receive training. Senior journalists from various media houses are conducting the courses

"It's a great opportunity for the local journalists to learn more professional skills, sensible journalism and responsibility," said Mr Iqbal.

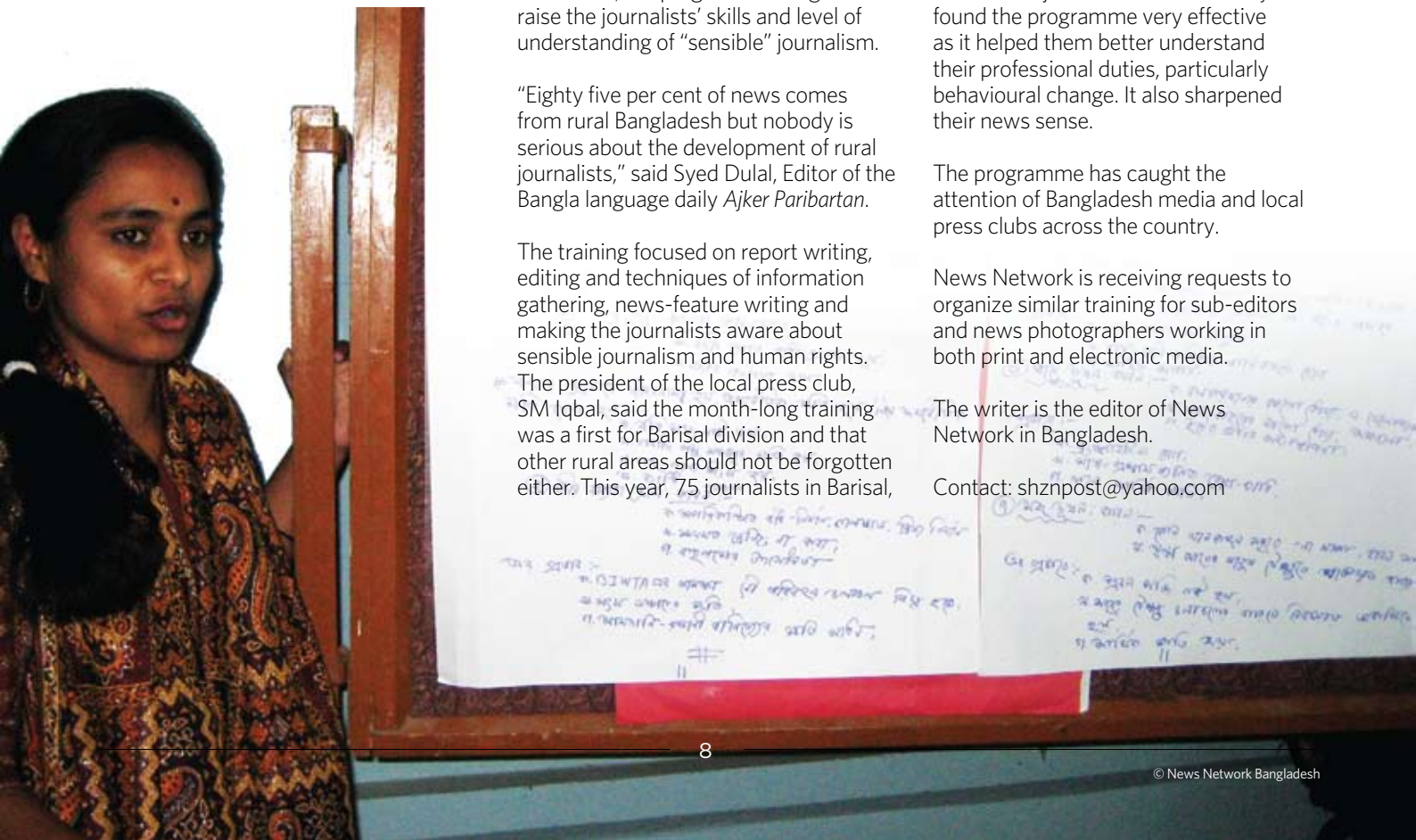
The trainee journalists said that they found the programme very effective as it helped them better understand their professional duties, particularly behavioural change. It also sharpened their news sense.

The programme has caught the attention of Bangladesh media and local press clubs across the country.

News Network is receiving requests to organize similar training for sub-editors and news photographers working in both print and electronic media.

The writer is the editor of News Network in Bangladesh.

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# Mission investigates press freedom



© UNESCO/ Serena Pepino

## ATTACKS IN NEPAL CONTINUE DESPITE DEMOCRACY BOOST

By Serena Pepino, UNESCO Kathmandu

Press freedom in Nepal continues to face serious threats despite the hope that restoration of democratic rule would improve the situation.

The Federation of Nepali Journalists recorded a staggering 342 press freedom violations in 2008 alone, including a significant escalation in the number of physical attacks on journalists and media outlets.

Four journalists have been killed since 2006 and one has been missing since July 2007.

"Freedom of opinion and expression, and to access information, are the heart of any democratic society: where this heart does not beat, there is no democracy," said UNESCO Kathmandu's head of office Colin Kaiser.

The International Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression Mission (also known as the International Media Mission, or IMM) visited Nepal in February to undertake a rapid response assessment of the situation.

The IMM incorporates fifteen international organisations, including UN agencies, global media associations, freedom of expression advocates and media development organisations. UNESCO joined the mission as a member.

The February trip was the sixth visit of the IMM to Nepal, following their inaugural stopover in July 2005.

The IMM met with the prime minister, ministers, the constituent assembly, leaders of government and opposition political parties, heads of security agencies, and media and civil society organisations.

The delegation also visited the southern city of Janakpur, where radio journalist Uma Singh was hacked to death by up to 20 men in her room in January this year.

Ms. Singh had broadcast and written about women's rights and against the caste system.

Local sources claim that, between January and March 2009, about 70 per cent of female journalists in the Terai region of the country have quit their profession over attack fears.

In some cases, armed gangs, often affiliated with political parties, are responsible for the intimidation.

The IMM has called on authorities in Nepal to undertake a prompt and impartial investigation into the murder and disappearance of journalists.

"Such attacks on media workers, publications and property are unacceptable and those responsible must be held accountable for their actions," said an IMM spokesperson.

The first day of the IMM's visit also coincided with the launch of the "Agenda for Change", a legal document produced by members

of a stakeholder group made up of Nepali experts in the area of freedom of expression.

The agenda's 62 recommendations provide clear guidance for those engaged in the constitution-writing process in Nepal and for Nepali legislators who will have to redraft some existing Nepali laws and draft some new ones on freedom of expression.

The IMM also voiced concern over the conditions for female Nepali journalists, already seriously underrepresented in the profession, because of their higher vulnerability to attack and harassment.

Consequently, UNESCO Kathmandu is exploring a scheme to train female journalists to write in such a way that does not result in attacks and/or abuse. This initiative could also improve their writing skills in basic and conflict-sensitive journalism and gender-reporting.

UNESCO Kathmandu is also working on the implementation of projects aimed at addressing Nepal's post-conflict momentum.

The objective is to strengthen the communication network among community learning and community media centres, empower rural media organizations, develop recommendations to improve freedom of expression laws and increase the professional skills of media professionals, especially women and the socially excluded.

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# Unravelling the media

## CONSUMERS OF MASS COMMUNICATION URGED TO DECIPHER THE MESSAGE

By **Rojana Manowalailao**,  
UNESCO Bangkok

Fifteen-year-old Chiang Mai student Maneenop Watchiradechawut claims the media has a very powerful influence on her daily decisions and lifestyle.

The student backed this up with her admission that she believed a TV commercial that implied an Asian model gained a white face after using a face whitening product for only two weeks.

"I didn't realise the commercial was exaggerated," the Kawila Wittayalai School student said. "But how could Asian people become white in less than two weeks?"

Maneenop also said that a cosmetic commercial made her want to wear makeup.

"When I see girls in the commercials wear makeup and they look pretty, I want to look pretty like them." Maneenop had earlier attended a one-day camp for 60 students and parents at her school on media literacy.

She became one of the speakers at the camp.

Media literacy is the ability to critically analyze and evaluate the media, said Susanne Ornager, Regional Adviser of Communication and Information in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO Bangkok.

It enables people to interpret and make informed judgments as users of information and media.

Media consumers must be made aware of the media's impact and Thailand needs to become a media literate society, said Kannika Leksoongneon, a school nurse at Kawila Wittayalai School.

"I myself used to believe everything that was said in commercials."

After attending one of the workshops on media literacy organised by Kasetsart University's Thailand Media Literacy Centre, Ms Kannika said she viewed the media differently and initiated the yearly media literacy camp at her school.

Ms Kannika screened a television clip for her students of a young girl being murdered by a person she met in an

Internet chat room to promote media literacy and help raise awareness of the possible harm from new media.

"Controlling young people's media consumption, especially the use of the Internet, is not possible. The more you tell them not to, the more they want to. It needs a more subtle approach," she said.

Viewers consume the media for entertainment. However, it is possible that they could subconsciously apply what they see on television to their real lives, said Assistant -Professor Porntip Yenjabok, head of Kasetsart University's Thailand Media Literacy Centre. She cited an example of how violence in the media can translate into reality.

"When viewers see a soap opera character throwing acid onto a person they don't like, the viewer may be influenced to do the same in real life to express their anger and revenge."

However, Prof Porntip said the media is not the lone influence on an individual's viewpoint and cited other factors such as family background and upbringing.

UNESCO Bangkok has provided support to projects relating to media literacy in Thailand since 2005: from producing a teacher's manual on media education for secondary school education in Thai; organising the Asia-Pacific Media Literacy Workshop for Secondary School Teachers; the Media Education in Thailand Workshop and other workshops across Bangkok.

Thailand needs to have a formal school curriculum on media literacy to turn the country into a media literate society, said Prof Porntip. But, promoting media literacy in schools nationwide needs the support of the Thai Ministry of Education.

"If there's no policy from the ministry to put media literacy onto the national agenda and put it onto the school curriculum, it won't have a fast and lasting impact," she said.

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# Cross-border migration probe

## CRITICAL STUDY AIMS TO PROTECT MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

By UNESCO Almaty

Kazakhstan ranks ninth on the world's list of migrant receiving countries.

While exact figures are unknown, estimates range from 300,000, up to one million labour migrants.

The vast majority are from neighbouring Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; many work in the country without proper registration or employment documents.

Irregular migrant workers are more vulnerable to exploitation, harassment, sub-standard working conditions and other rights violations.

According to International Labour Organization documents, there is consensus that irregular migration is undesirable and must be minimized, particularly as it often puts workers in a position of vulnerability due to a violation of their basic human rights.

Central Asia is a historic crossroads for trade and has long been viewed as a link between Europe, Asia and the Middle East. In the 21st Century, the region has increasingly become a hub for labour migration.

The Republic of Kazakhstan has experienced unprecedented economic growth since gaining independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991. This robust growth, vast oil and gas resources, a construction boom and a small national population of an estimated 15.48 million in 2007 according to The World Bank, have made it an attractive destination for labour migrants, especially from its economically struggling neighbours. Citizens of the former-Soviet republics have easy access to Kazakhstan's labour market. Even with the current economic slowdown, Kazakhstan offers opportunities for income that is lacking across the border.

UNESCO Almaty has responded to this dynamic with activities aimed at helping



Kyrgyz labour migrants en route to Sverdlovsk, Russia.

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policymakers and other stakeholders better understand this phenomenon.

"UNESCO works globally to strengthen links between research and policy. And in Central Asia labour migration is a critical area where both research and policy need development," said Laura Kennedy, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences in the UNESCO Almaty cluster office.

Aiming to learn more about the conditions of the migrant worker population in Kazakhstan, UNESCO partnered with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the research project *Kazakhstan as a Destination Country for Labour Migrants*. The project was initiated in late 2006.

The research project includes the first

large-scale survey of labour migrants in Kazakhstan, polling 1,500 migrants in 10 regions of the country.

"In a country the size of Continental Europe, a survey like this is no small endeavour," said Ms Kennedy.

The government of Kazakhstan endorsed the project and provided background data and a team of researchers and experts from three continents worked on the survey and report.

The final report will be formally presented to the Kazakhstani government in the spring of 2009 for comments prior to publication.

UNESCO's interest in improved quality and access to information on migration in the Central Asia region also led to a new partnership with the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

UNESCO will work with AUCA to expand its Central Asia Migration Research Network, build its research database and broaden its reach to policymakers and other stakeholders in the region.

As part of this project, the Network will launch a quarterly migration newsletter and expand its existing weekly migration newsfeed to include more English language content to appeal to a global audience.

Ainura Asamidinova, Project Manager at AUCA's Social Research Center is optimistic about the partnership.

She said the Electronic Network on Migration in Central Asia is an important tool in better understanding the chaotic migration policies and processes in the Central Asian republics.

"The joint collaboration of the two organizations will make a significant contribution into expanding knowledge of migration processes that can lead to creation of better policies, hence to the contribution into development processes of newly independent countries," said Ms. Asamidinova.

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# UNESCO Bangkok's new Director highlights the challenges



## By Clive Wing, UNESCO Bangkok

**Born and raised near a small city that also developed a strong relationship with UNESCO when it was designated a World Heritage Site in 2000, Mr Gwang-Jo Kim is the new Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok.**

**This interview profiles the life of a young boy who rose from a farming background to become the UNESCO representative to Thailand, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Singapore.**

### What was your childhood like?

I was raised in a rural area of Korea near a small city called Gyeongju, located in the south-eastern part of the Korean peninsula. It happens to be a UNESCO World Heritage Site. My father was a school teacher, but my grandfather and great-grandfather, in total 10 generations, were farmers. Our fields were ploughed by oxen and I planted and harvested rice by hand. It was very laborious!

### You clearly had a good education. How did you manage that?

When I was attending primary school, per capita income was less than USD\$100 annually. Our living standard was below that of the Philippines. But the education I received was very good although the classes were large by today's standards.

I had more than 70 classmates. I was lucky to have had a dedicated teacher so that by the time we left primary school all of us could read, write and calculate.

I didn't want to plant rice for the rest of my life. So the best way for me to escape from the rural setting was to get a better education, which I did. After secondary school I went to one of the most prestigious colleges in Korea. I graduated from Korea University, College of Law.

Education gave me an opportunity to find my place in a broader world.

### Was education from primary to university free at that time?

Elementary education was free of charge. But schooling requires textbooks and meals and commuting between village and school. There were tuition fees for secondary education.

I was lucky because my parents and grandparents paid for the tuition.

### When did you get interested in education as a subject?

It happened later. I graduated from a law college with majors in civil law and public administration. As a law school student I had a couple of options. First, becoming a lawyer by taking the Korean bar examination which is extremely competitive; or to become a civil servant by taking another highly competitive examination, the State Higher Civil Service examination.

I wanted to work in a sector that would better the lives of the people. I was inspired by my father to work in education. I started my career as an officer in Seoul Metropolitan City and quickly moved to the Ministry of Education. There I had an opportunity to study abroad on a government scholarship. I went to the US for advanced training in education at Harvard University and returned to work in the Ministry of Education.

### That must have been an exciting time because of the huge investment and expansion in education.

You're quite right. I started in the ministry in 1980, the year the military took over the government. The economy grew fast so there were jobs for graduates.

Looking back, I'm proud to have been part of the expansion at all levels. If you look at the growth trajectory, higher education expanded dramatically in the 1980s. In the early 1990s we focused on improving the quality of education because the expansion was at the expense of quality.

### Your main interest is social policy analysis but you've also got a great interest in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and ICT (Information and Communication Technology). How did that happen?

It was in 1995 when I worked in the office of the president, Kim Young-sam. Under his regime we were asked to prepare a broad education reform package. I participated as a practitioner.

I led a small working group which prepared the reform agenda. The reform is now referred to as the 5/31 education reform because it was unveiled on May 31st 1995. If you look at the package, one emphasis was the introduction of information and communication

technology into schools and classrooms. I was part of it because my working group raised this issue of ICT in education.

At that time, many said that it was too early because few countries were investing heavily in ICT in education. But nevertheless, we began to invest, providing equipment to all schools, training teachers and providing content.

We used to emphasize TVET at the school level, meaning we used to have TVET schools at the upper secondary level. But because the economy changed so dramatically, we thought it might not be good to stream students so early on.

So one of our proposals was to postpone TVET to post-secondary level. At the secondary level we would provide generic or general training. So tertiary education emphasized the importance of TVET so that students could specialize in a skill in high demand by industry. That was the heart of the package.

### Of the achievements in your career to date, which are you most proud of?

Personally, I was able to grow with the system and make a contribution. I'm proud of the 5/31 education reform for which I was in the office of the president for two and a half years. Even now, some of the recommendations are being implemented.

### What do you see as the strengths of UNESCO Bangkok?

More than anything else is the reputation which the office has accumulated over the years. And with good staff I can see why it is said that UNESCO Bangkok is the exemplary office.

### What is your major challenge?

I have yet to grasp the details of how we operate. Another challenge is to secure resources which are much lower than I expected. I'm talking not just in financial terms but also in knowledge and expertise. We have good human resources but considering the growing and diverse demands from field offices and Member States, we must mobilize more money and people.

### Do you expect closer ties with South Korea?

As long as the Korean experience is relevant with the work we do, I think there will be closer ties. Korea has been able to grow its society and economy in a dramatic fashion. That experience could be highly relevant to our Member

States. Also, I'd like to stress that Korea has also made lots of mistakes. I don't want to see other countries make them too. We can draw lessons from the success and failures.

### What are the lessons learned in education in South Korea?

In terms of policy reform, maybe some of the approaches which Korea took over the years in terms of expanding education which in some cases were contrary to what many experts recommend. For example, when I was at primary school the class size was more than 70. This is not something academics would praise. We had large classes because we didn't have enough resources and yet we had a huge demand for education.

So the government decided to accommodate all those who wanted an education. The only way to do this was to relax standards. We also did double and triple shifts. So when it comes to making a decision between providing school equipment and providing more teachers, I would say go for more and better teachers.

If you have good teachers, they can instruct many students. Teachers can inspire pupils to move ahead and teachers can deliver a good quality education in spite of big class sizes. This worked in Korea. But the way I see the school system in many countries, this wouldn't work because teachers are underpaid and not well respected.

### How do you characterize education services in the region?

My impression is that the region as a whole has a great challenge. Some parts of our region have an EFA (Education for All) challenge. In other countries we have challenges that go beyond EFA. Those that have met the EFA objective need stronger secondary and higher education. I can't pinpoint just one challenge because the region is so big and populous and diverse in terms of economic development.

Overall, the quality of education is a big challenge. Anything beyond primary education is a challenge because on the one hand we have to deliver literacy to everybody; but at the same time you need a chunk of people who work on technology and create jobs and these people have to come from higher education.

We must broaden the education base



© UNESCO/Sirisak Chaiyasook

by promoting EFA and we need better quality higher education and research and development. I would describe this as "EFA and beyond".

Illiterates can be counted in the hundreds of millions in our region. In terms of delivering literacy, EFA and the conventional approach is one way, but we can be more creative in terms of providing the skills required, particularly in South Asia. How can we do that? Perhaps by relying more on cutting edge technology to deliver literacy programmes. We can rethink the traditional approach of schooling because it requires a huge investment.

At this time of economic turmoil, it is hard to imagine that any government will increase their education budget or aid-givers increase their contribution. UNESCO must think how best we can advise and inspire national governments to come up with more creative solutions to deliver literacy programmes.

The Regional Bureau also works in culture, social sciences and communications and information. From my experience of working in the Korean government, I convened meetings of people from many different ministries. My last position was as Deputy Minister of Human Resource Development which covers many different areas including culture and communications, so I have working knowledge of the other interests of UNESCO. Personally, I'm looking forward to working with all sectors especially in the countries the Regional Bureau works with directly: Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Singapore and Myanmar.

### And balancing the requests of Member States?

In terms of managing our human resources, my belief is that individuals

need to grow with the organization. In practical terms it means us as a regional bureau providing training and self development opportunities for our staff in the office and the field. In terms of our contribution to Member States, I think we need more focus in what we do so that programmes are more potent. I would summarise this as selection and focus.

Member States should understand that we are not omnipotent for obvious reasons. Resources are one thing, and the way UNESCO does programming and budgeting is another. We need to be more realistic and modest in what we say we can deliver.

Over the years I hope our Member States will understand our position. What we deliver should be highly relevant and of the highest quality. To achieve this we should upgrade our capacity in terms of managing knowledge, highly relevant analysis and so on.

### About Mr Kim

An education expert, Mr Kim has worked in various capacities for the Government of the Republic of Korea. As Deputy Minister of Education and Human Resources, Mr Kim initiated the "Global Human Resources Forum", aimed at providing an international platform for sharing information, knowledge and best practices in human resources issues among leaders.

Mr Kim worked in the Office of the President of the Republic of Korea, where he assisted former president Kim Young-sam in the fields of education and social policy. He also played a key role in an education reform initiative that aimed to restructure the entire Korean educational system.

Born in 1955, Mr Kim is a former professor at the Graduate School of Education at Keimyung University. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Korea University in 1978. He also holds a master's degree and a Ph.D in Education from Harvard University, USA.

# Unique study into sexuality in Laos

FINDINGS TO HELP  
HIV PREVENTION  
MORE EFFECTIVE



© Chris Lyttleton

By UNESCO Bangkok

Semen is seen as a precious "commodity" and a source of masculine strength, reported the first-ever ethnographic study on male-to-male sexuality in Lao PDR, recently published by UNESCO Bangkok.

This belief is at the basis of some men's fear to have sex too often, especially with *kathoey* (transgendered men).

"Sex with a *kathoey* once is as tiring as sex three times with a woman," one interviewee said in *Mekong Erotics: Men Loving/Pleasuring/Using Men in Lao PDR*.

The study was conducted by Dr Chris Lyttleton of Macquarie University in Australia and a team of Lao peer researchers. It sheds light on the context in which male-to-male sex takes place in Lao PDR and enhances our understanding of the way Laotian MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) view themselves, their lovers and their lives.

Ninety-three men were interviewed. In general, it appears that sex between men is not seen as a big deal for many

young men; often it is seen as a playful and pleasurable pastime.

The study pays attention to the rapid changes in Lao society and the increased visibility of homosexuality in society, partly caused by increased interaction with the outside world. It focuses on the issue of stigma and discrimination which many men say is rapidly decreasing, helping more men to disclose their preferences.

The study also discusses in-depth issues surrounding sexual attraction and desire, gender and gender reversal, the pleasure in finding many (more) partners but also incidents of sexual coercion, exploitation and rape that occurred in the lives of the men interviewed.

The final chapter deals with HIV and sexual risk, noting that condom use is low, partner change is high and, hence, the risk for HIV and STIs was high too. Several cultural and psychological factors associated with low condom use and high partner change is discussed.

*Mekong Erotics: Men Loving/Pleasuring/Using Men in Lao PDR* is the second ethnographic study on male-to-male sexuality that UNESCO Bangkok has commissioned. A previous study was done in Cambodia.

It is hoped that the study will provide information to make HIV prevention, care and support interventions for this group more appropriate and effective.

The study is suggested as compulsory reading for those working with / for MSM in Lao PDR and in surrounding countries.

UNESCO Bangkok aims to conduct similar research in other countries in the region during 2009 and 2010, in an effort to make HIV prevention more relevant to the sexual cultures of people to whom interventions are directed.

The PDF file can be downloaded from: [www2.unescobkk.org/hiv aids/fulltextdb/aspUploadFiles/msm.pdf](http://www2.unescobkk.org/hiv aids/fulltextdb/aspUploadFiles/msm.pdf) A limited number of hard copies is available from UNESCO Bangkok.

Contact: [nt.loan@unescobkk.org](mailto:nt.loan@unescobkk.org)

## Abundance of resources on sexual health online

By UNESCO Bangkok

"I am gay. I am lesbian. What about you? Are you OK?" is one of 49 booklets and 931 resource materials on sexual health and HIV related issues in UNESCO's online Healthy Sexuality Database.

The bilingual database, launched two days before St. Valentine's Day this year, provides a wide assortment of printed and audio-visual materials developed by government ministries, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations and health professionals.

It is divided into various categories, ranging from radio spots, documentaries, talk shows, posters and cartoon booklets, to study reports and academic theses.

The materials date back 20 years and can be downloaded free of charge.

The English-Thai online Healthy Sexuality Database profiles the history of sexual health and HIV prevention in Thailand.

It is a comprehensive online resource to ensure materials on the topics of sexual health, HIV and related issues are archived, stored and made accessible to health workers and the general public.

The database is supported by UNESCO Bangkok, in partnership with the National Science Museum of Thailand and UNAIDS.

Access the database at: [www.hs-db.net/eng/index.php](http://www.hs-db.net/eng/index.php)

Contact: [p.bergstrom@unescobkk.org](mailto:p.bergstrom@unescobkk.org)



© Teenpath Project

# Protection of Plain of Jars set in stone

By Julie Van Den Bergh, Chief Technical Advisor and International Archaeologist Plain of Jars Project

Deep in the heart of Lao PDR lies the Plain of Jars. High on the plateau of Xieng Khouang, clusters of solid ancient stone jars, which measure between one and three metres in height and diameter, have been placed in the landscape.

Little is known about the people who constructed them. Local legend has it that in the sixth century, the Lao king Khun Jeuam had the jars carved and filled with rice wine after an important victory to celebrate the defeat of his enemy.

It was not until the early 1930s that the jars began to reveal their secrets. The French geologist Madeleine Colani, and her sister Eleonore excavated around the jars and found burials containing pottery, bones, glass beads and metal artefacts.

Together with cremated bones and charred teeth found inside some jars, these convinced her that the jars were burial-related monuments. The few archaeological investigations conducted since then confirm the link with mortuary practices.

In 1998, UNESCO and the Government of Lao PDR initiated the "Safeguarding the Plain of Jars" project to develop a conservation and management strategy for the complex landscape. Since then, the Plain of Jars has been surveyed and

mapped using geographical information system (GIS) technology; a cultural heritage inventory has been completed; and unexploded ordinance have been cleared. Currently, with the financial support of NZAID, a management and sustainable tourism plan is being developed in preparation for the expected nomination of the site for World Heritage status in 2010.

The inventory of jar sites is continuing, with 58 recorded in some detail and a further 27 known. The distribution of the sites confirms that their location is related to overland cultural exchange routes to and from China, India, Thailand and Viet Nam. The majority of the sites are located on low foothills surrounding the central plain and on the fringes of upland valleys or on mountain ridges.

Conducting a survey of these remote sites has been challenging and complicated by the deadly legacy of Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) from both Indochina Wars (1946-1975). Treading carefully and keeping one's eyes peeled has been the motto of the Plain of Jars survey team since 2001!

As part of the Heritage Management Plan, seven jar sites have been cleared of UXO. In collaboration with the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), an archaeo-demining methodology was developed. This unique methodology ensures that impacts from UXO demolition are minimized so that the heritage resources can be protected. It also allows for the collection and recording

of archaeological data, isolated finds and deposits to be conducted alongside the demining process in a safe and professional way.

Managing and protecting the dispersed jar sites is not easy with limited staff, so the team turned to the local community to train them to help protect the jar sites. In return, the villages at the jar sites receive a portion of the entry tickets proceeds and benefit through basic infrastructure improvements and assistance in developing community-based heritage tourism.

A Heritage Management Plan for the Plain of Jars will be put into action by the local government ahead of the expected World Heritage nomination in order to address the challenges of conserving the site. The funding needed to implement the Plan will be collected from tourism revenue. A passport entry system for visitors will go into effect on 1 January 2010.

The main hurdle in managing the site will be local human resource development. GIS training has been conducted for the project staff. A training workshop for local heritage guides is planned for May 2009 by UNESCO Bangkok in cooperation with the Lao National Tourism Administration and site authorities. It will help visitors to better understand this mysterious archaeological landscape and contribute to safeguarding the Plain of Jars for years to come.

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# Counting culture

By Malisa Santigul, UNESCO Bangkok

Food, dance, music, traditional knowledge, performance, films, tourism, advertising, books, architecture, software, photography, even blank CDs... The list of cultural domains is extensive.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UNESCO Bangkok's aim to capture tangible and intangible heritage into quantifiable means is undoubtedly a challenging feat to accomplish, but not entirely impossible.

"We measure what we treasure," said Ko-Chih Tung, Regional Advisor of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Asia-Pacific and Head of the UIS-AIMS Unit, UNESCO Bangkok.

Countries collect data based on their own systems of classifications and definition of culture. But to compare cultural data from one country to another is difficult when such classifications don't match up and different standards are used. This is where the revised 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) comes in.

What the "Culture and Development: Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the Framework for Culture Statistics" had in mind was for countries to provide suggestions and feedback on the draft framework for Culture Statistics by UIS, come to a consensus, endorse it and draw up national action plans that would make use of this framework.

Over 50 culture policy makers, national statistics officers, planners and advisors from the Asia-Pacific region gathered behind closed doors in October last year in Bangkok to closely examine this technical specimen.

The idea of cultural statistics was first suggested in 1972 at the UNESCO Conference of European Ministers of Culture in Helsinki. Fourteen years later in 1986, a UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics was produced. The 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics is based on an initial draft produced for UIS by Paul Owens of Burns Owen Partnership, Calvin



Village folk deity from rural South India

Taylor of the University of Leeds and Andy Pratt of the London School of Economics. The 1986 FCS was used for consultation only.

Why revise the framework? For one, the world has changed, and consequently, the definition of culture has changed as well. The 1986 version was based on a static notion of culture, while the 2009 framework is not. Rather, it uses UIS' definition of culture, which is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, seen as a repository of human identity, achievement and diversity. Culture, according to UIS, not only is an economic phenomenon, but also has a social dimension which makes it even more challenging to measure. The 2009 framework aims to capture emerging areas and concepts such as ICTs and multiculturalism.

The framework provides a conceptual foundation and core dataset to enable comparison of cultural statistics, utilizing standards such as the International Standard Industrial Classification and the International Standard Classification of Occupations. In the new framework, countries can choose which of the limited number of "domains" or categories of culture are relevant to them.

© UNESCO/ Anakavur, South India - Subramaniam Venkatraman

As a whole, this particular framework pretty much sets the guidelines on what to collect and how to collect. That said, during the meeting, one particular session that garnered a great deal of attention from country representatives was the classification of cultural domains and activities.

When all is said and done, what can cultural statistics do for society? As Lydia Deloumeaux of UIS put it, the benefits of culture statistics are not obviously apparent, but when known and understood, can be equally influential. Cultural statistics can help determine the role of culture in the economy, particularly in the areas of calculating the percentage of GDP contribution. Cultural statistics can enable preservation and valuation of heritage, as well as improve social cohesion and inform cultural policy.

Based on regional consultations, the 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics will be revised and the final draft will be presented to the UNESCO General Conference in October 2009. Revisions of the framework are currently underway by an expert group.

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# Celebrated monastery saved from ruin

## WORLD HERITAGE NOMINEE RETURNED TO FORMER GLORY

By UNESCO Almaty

The seventh century Buddhist Monastery of Ajina Tapa in Tajikistan is back in shape.

Abandoned and left to deteriorate, Ajina Tapa, or Devil Mount is one of the most celebrated Buddhist monasteries in Central Asia, famed for its role in spreading Buddhism in the region in the seventh and eighth centuries.

The site is a sophisticated blend of earthen architectural forms, sculptural detail and wall painting decoration, all of which are unique.

“Being one of the most representative Buddhist complexes in Central Asia, it is on the priority list of potential sites to be nominated to UNESCO’s World Heritage List from the Republic of Tajikistan”, said

Yuri Peshkov, Culture Specialist at the UNESCO Office in Almaty.

The monastery once consisted of two halves making up a large single complex of religious and residential buildings. Its gigantic 12 metre statue of the reclining Buddha is the largest of its kind in clay. It is now on exhibition at the National Museum of Antiquities in Dushanbe.

“As all the sculptures in Ajina Tapa were made of clay, the excavation process and removal and conservation of the Buddha in Nirvana in the 1960s and 70s was very difficult,” said Director of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography, Professor Rakhim Masov.

However, after excavation, Ajina Tapa was abandoned and soon began to deteriorate.

To rescue this important site, Tajik authorities with UNESCO and Japanese Funds-in-Trust initiated the Preservation of the Buddhist Monastery of Ajina Tapa, Tajikistan: Heritage of the Ancient Silk Roads project in 2005. The project – which ended last year – was implemented by a team of national and international experts.

Renowned Japanese conservation expert, Professor Kunio Watanabe of

Saitama University said the project stabilized and conserved the most endangered walls of the monastery and the stupa itself which were suffering from erosion, salt and groundwater. The key components of the project were: archaeological research and cleaning; establishment of a documentation centre and a field laboratory; complete three-dimensional documentation of the site; condition assessment and conservation of the most endangered mud walls of the monastery and the stupa; and management planning to ensure the long-term protection of the site.

The project has also helped to develop the skills and expertise of Tajik professionals who have been involved in the safeguarding and conservation of their own cultural heritage.

“The implementation of the project is seen as a first step for future research and preservation of the important Buddhist Monastery Ajina Tapa after neglect and serious deterioration,” said Mr Peshkov.

The site is located in south Tajikistan in the Vahsh valley, about 13 km. east of the modern city of Kurgan Tube.

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# Modern challenges for traditional crafts

By Vanessa Achilles, UNESCO Bangkok

A UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts winner, Mr. Mongkolwat Jantavesiri, has been carving marble for 25 years. The stone collector and former student of Chulalongkorn University gradually transformed his hobby and passion into a full-time career, turning marble and stones into small decorative items such as vases.

But being an artisan is not easy nowadays. Having “magic fingers” is not enough to sustain a livelihood and preserve ancestral traditions.

“Artisans who wish to make a living from their crafts need more than ever to be able to cope with change and innovation to remain competitive,” said Ms. Surapee Rojanavongse, Honorary President of the ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA).

The new trading rules in a globalized environment bring both opportunities and challenges to which many artisans are struggling to adapt to. Email and the internet allow artisans to maintain regular contact with customers or glimpse the latest fashion trends. Shipping across the world has become faster and more reliable for those who can handle complex logistical and customs procedures.

On the other hand, competition has grown exponentially within the sector and from industrial or mass-produced items fulfilling similar functions. Khmer tie-dye silk competes not only with other Asian silk, but also with block-printed fabric and industrial textiles from all over the world. Cotton and wool are replaced by synthetic fibres. Natural fibres and wood baskets are up against plastic containers.

The respect of intellectual property rights is also a challenge. The craft sector has never been shy to replicate its neighbours’ most successful products.

Within this context, UNESCO and its partners have developed a programme to encourage the craft sector to preserve cultural diversity and traditional skills and knowledge and promote high standards of quality and authenticity, while encouraging artisans to consider the relevance and function of their

creations.

The Award of Excellence for Handicrafts programme (formerly known as the Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts) is managed in South-East Asia as a partnership between UNESCO, AHPADA and the Support Arts and Crafts International Centre of Thailand (SACICT) since 2000. It has expanded in successive phases to all Asian countries, from Korea to Iran. Today, 649 handicrafts have received awards across Asia.

In addition to a certificate, the winners benefit from a range of capacity-building and promotional support that helps artisans assess the quality of their products and develop a critical eye to improve their craft production.

The workshops’ curriculum emphasizes the importance of quality control and culture-based product development – in effect, learning how to derive inspiration from the cultural environment. The workshop was developed in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Last year Mr. Mongkolwat also participated in the Bangkok workshop.

“From attending the workshop it makes me realize that my idea of a marble sculpture in the shape of a traditional bamboo monkey trap had some potential. However, the quality has to be improved, to make the piece outstanding

and marketable,” he said.

He then returned to his chisels and submitted the “Monkey Trap Display Vessel” to the 2008 product evaluation in South-East Asia. In October last year, his “Monkey Trap” received the UNESCO Award.

“I am proud I received this award; it motivates me to keep improving my products,” said Mr. Mongkolwat, the owner of Forestone Limited Partnership, which specializes in high quality stone products.

Mr. Mongkolwat’s next challenge will be to use the award to promote his craft.

The award also went to another 14 artisans from a total 70 entries submitted from South-East Asia. The range of submissions was highly diverse, including traditionally woven textiles and fibres, metalwork, carvings and ceramics. The products originated from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand.

The winning entries are on permanent display at the SACICT Centre in Bangsai in Ayutthaya, Thailand, and at several upcoming regional and international trade fairs.

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UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts winner Mongkolwat Jantavesiri and his award winning craft

# China's minorities given a voice

## CULTURE-BASED DEVELOPMENT AIMS TO ERADICATE POVERTY

By UNESCO Beijing

A three year programme to assist in the development of culture-based development in the ethnic minority regions of China is a collaboration between UNESCO Office Beijing's Culture section, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC) and seven other UN agencies resident in China.

The programme will strengthen the inclusion of ethnic minorities in cultural, socio-economic and political life through improved public policies and services. It will also strengthen the ability of ethnic minorities to manage cultural resources

and benefit from culture-based economic development in three counties of Guizhou, Qinghai and Yunnan and one prefecture in Tibet.

China is committed to lifting its minorities out of poverty, and is investing substantial domestic resources to make this happen. However, for its 106 million strong ethnic minority communities, great challenges remain.

The programme is funded by the Spanish Government through the Millennium Development Goal Fund - Culture and Development window. The Spanish Government has committed USD\$6 million to China, of which the Culture, Education and Social Science sections of UNESCO share USD\$1.3 million.

The eight participating UN agencies are: FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF,

UNIDO, WHO and UNESCO have taken an integrated approach in the formulation and implementation of project activities.

UNESCO will focus on: raising the awareness of the local stakeholders about cultural diversity through the introduction of the Cultural Diversity Programming Lens so that governance processes are more inclusive of ethnic minorities and sensitive to culturally-based development strategies; cultural mapping and museum enhancement to improve the proficiency of ethnic minorities to understand and protect cultural capital and awareness of cultural diversity; the development of cultural tourism to build competence to manage minority community resources and leverage tourism for local livelihoods; and, capacity building based on the criteria and conditions of UNESCO's Award of Excellence for Handicrafts programme to strengthen its institutional environment for ethnic minority arts and crafts.

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## STAFF UNION

### Mami's super strike

Congratulations to Mami Umayahara of UNESCO Bangkok who was awarded the accolade of "Most Popular Female Bowler" at the UN Inter-Agency Bowling Tournament.

The event, hosted by ESCAP, was held in January this year at SF Strike Bowl, Major Cineplex, Bangkok.

Seventeen teams from different UN agencies participated.



Mami Umayahara (first right), along with other participants of the UN Inter-Agency Bowling Tournament

© UNESCO

# The world in my hand

## NEW ELECTRONIC DEVICE BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE

By Bakhtiyor Khalikulov,  
UNESCO Tashkent

"The man makes [a] journey through time every day. Travel to the past is our memory. And travel to the future is our dream," said Anonymous.

My life is constantly in movement. The person is arranged in such a manner that he/she learns about the world through communication, studying different sciences, mastering new trades and acquiring various skills.

When I visit a new, unfamiliar place I always communicate with people. I get information directly from them.

But what about that ancient residence in the city centre?

Every time I pass by, I muse about its history and its destiny. Over and over again I regret that there is no person to

explain the mysteries of its bygone days or reveal its stone "soul" now cloaked with the centuries-old dust of history. Would you be surprised if an electronic guide, a small device the size of a palm, could relate the history of monuments and architectural sites?

This sounds too good to be true. But UNESCO Tashkent has initiated a project to make this application a reality.

UNESCO specialists have developed an electronic database of historical cities inscribed on the World Heritage List. Bukhara was chosen as the pilot city in Uzbekistan.

A detailed assessment of the condition of residential buildings in the historic Shakhristan quarter of the city was undertaken.

Data was combined with a geographic information (GIS) to produce 26 thematic maps for use as navigator aids.

These maps illustrate social aspects, building conditions and areas of historical interest through the use of plans and pictures.

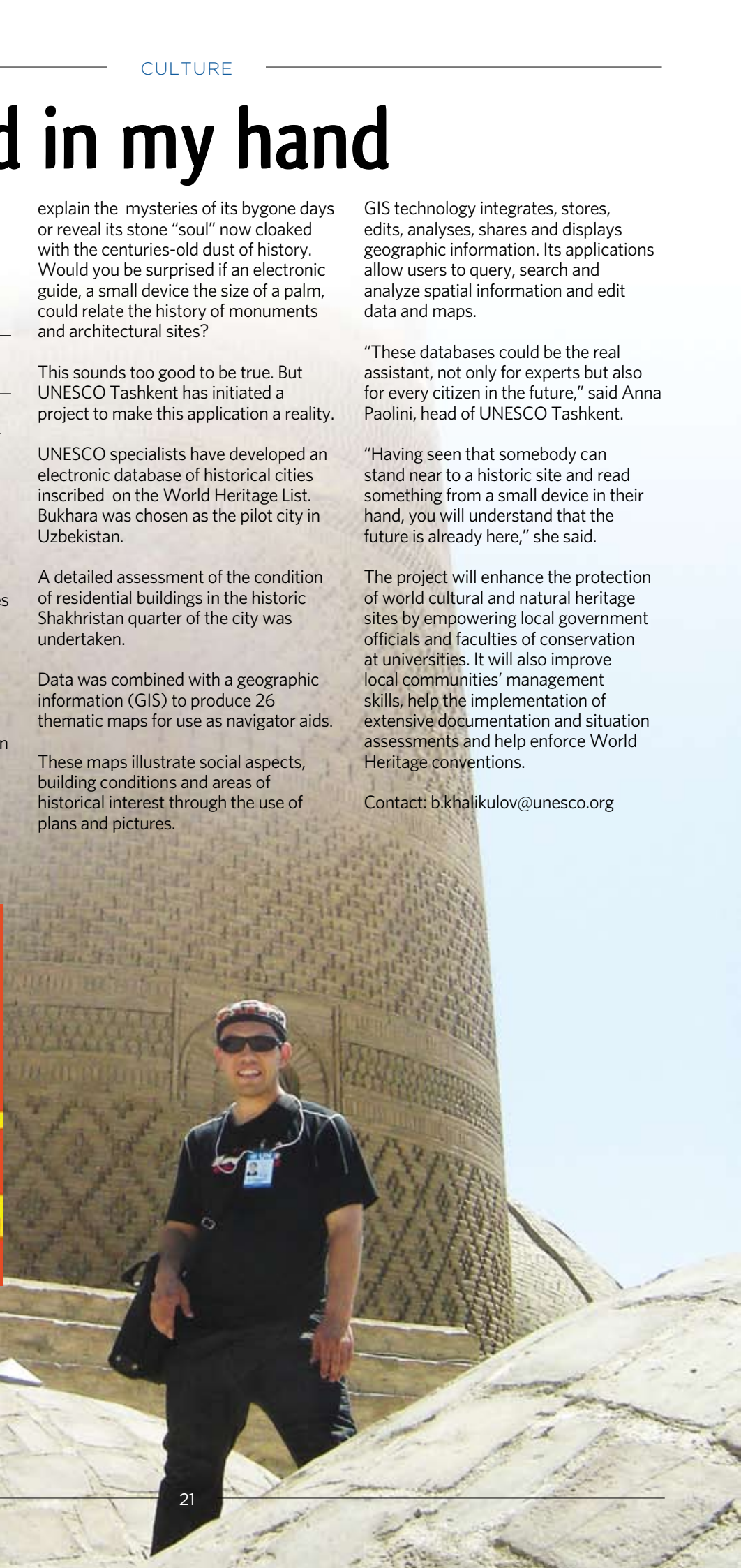
GIS technology integrates, stores, edits, analyses, shares and displays geographic information. Its applications allow users to query, search and analyze spatial information and edit data and maps.

"These databases could be the real assistant, not only for experts but also for every citizen in the future," said Anna Paolini, head of UNESCO Tashkent.

"Having seen that somebody can stand near to a historic site and read something from a small device in their hand, you will understand that the future is already here," she said.

The project will enhance the protection of world cultural and natural heritage sites by empowering local government officials and faculties of conservation at universities. It will also improve local communities' management skills, help the implementation of extensive documentation and situation assessments and help enforce World Heritage conventions.

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© Department of Marine and Coastal Resources of Thailand

**Qingdao, China**  
**International Training Workshop on Monitoring Technique and Emergency Response of Marine Oil Spills**

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO's Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) initiates regular training workshops to improve regional capability to respond to oil spills.

Where: Qingdao, China  
 Date: 20-23 April 2009  
 Info: z.wenxi@unesco.org  
<http://westpac.unescobkk.org>

**Dushanbe, Tajikistan**  
**Workshop on the New Access to Information Law**

Tajik policymakers and experts will review and make recommendations for elaboration of the new access to information law of the Republic of Tajikistan in this two-day technical workshop.

Where: Dushanbe, Tajikistan  
 Date: 28-29 April 2009  
 Info: l.kennedy@unesco.org  
 s.karpov@unesco.org  
[www.unesco.kz](http://www.unesco.kz)

**Tehran, Iran**  
**Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Coordination and Capacity Building Workshop**

The workshop is the sixth in a series of Asia-Pacific regional workshops sponsored by the Japanese Funds-In-Trust, to assist UNESCO Member States in building additional capacity for ESD leadership, coordination and monitoring.

Where: Tehran, Iran  
 Date: 28-30 April 2009  
 Info: j.bacha@unesco.org

**Kyrgyzstan**  
**Training on HIV Prevention for University Teachers**

Manual on HIV prevention for university teachers adapted for the Kyrgyz Republic is at the heart of this training on preventive education.

Where: Kyrgyzstan, Southern and Northern oblasts of the country  
 Date: April 2009  
 Info: g.li@unesco.org



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**Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**  
**Fostering Community Radio and Community Multimedia Centers in Central Asia**

A training workshop for Community Radio (CR) representatives and European commission / United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Governmental officials that will lead to the recognition of the value of CR/ Community Multimedia Centers (CRC) for community development.

Where: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
 Date: April 2009  
 Info: s.karpov@unesco.org, [www.unesco.kz](http://www.unesco.kz)

**Manila, Philippines**  
**Session of the Regional Committee Meeting for the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific**

Current issues related to cross-border higher education in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing particularly on the recognition of academic qualifications, will be examined.

Where: Manila, Philippines  
 Date: 6-8 May 2009  
 Info: hr.kim@unesco.org

**Astana, Kazakhstan**  
**UNESCO Sub-regional Workshop on the Serial World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads**

The workshop, the fifth in a series, will discuss a serial and transnational nomination of Silk Road World Heritage Sites in China and Central Asia.

Where: Astana, Kazakhstan  
 Date: 12-15 May 2009  
 Info: y.peshkov@unesco.org

**Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**  
**Access to Information: Training Workshop for Civil Servants**

The workshop is for civil servants and information professionals who work with requests for information under the access to information law in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Where: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
 Date: May 2009  
 Info: l.kennedy@unesco.org, s.karpov@unesco.org, [www.unesco.kz](http://www.unesco.kz)



© Department of Marine and Coastal Resources of Thailand

**Shanghai, China**  
**Workshop on the Coral Reef under Climate and Anthropogenic Perturbations**

Coral reefs in South-East Asia are the most threatened and damaged, with unprecedented rates of coral reef destruction from anthropogenic pressures and climate change. This first workshop organized by IOC/ WESTPAC focuses on issues such as food-web structure, biogeochemical cycles of coral reef systems and techniques in coral reef studies.

Where: East China Normal University, Shanghai, China,  
 Date: May 2009  
 Info: z.wenxi@unesco.org  
<http://westpac.unescobkk.org>

**Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**  
**Capacity-Building for Records Management and Online Access to Public Information**

The workshop will provide skills on online access to governmental information in line with access to information law.

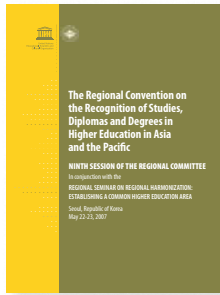
Where: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan  
 Date: May 2009  
 Info: s.karpov@unesco.org, [www.unesco.kz](http://www.unesco.kz)

**Almaty, Kazakhstan**  
**Training of School Teachers on HIV Prevention**

The training is based around the *Manual on HIV Prevention* for school teachers adapted and revised for Kazakhstan.

Where: Almaty, Kazakhstan  
 Date: May - June 2009  
 Info: g.li@unesco.org

This list provides recent publications from UNESCO Bangkok. For further information, please contact Caroline Haddad, Head of Publication Services, at [c.haddad@unesco.org](mailto:c.haddad@unesco.org). A full listing of UNESCO Bangkok publications can be accessed at: [www.unesco.org/e-library/publications](http://www.unesco.org/e-library/publications)



**Higher Education**

*The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific - Ninth Session of the Regional Committee* provides a synthesis report of the latest Asia-Pacific regional meeting which was held in Seoul, Korea in 2007. The report details activities that largely focused on plans for revising the Asia-Pacific Convention, with a view towards preparing for a new era of globalization in higher education. The report also addresses key issues in cross-border higher education that have been forged during the last decade. An attached CD provides further in-depth coverage of the meeting.



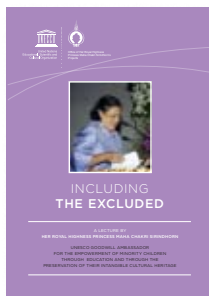
**South Asia EFA Report**

This report is a compilation of national reports specific to the South Asia sub-region, covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The report provides a comparative assessment of progress towards EFA in the South Asia sub-region and aims to identify and locate the remaining gaps in terms of quality and equity sub-nationally, with a focus on disadvantaged and excluded populations. It highlights the contextual background of education to provide a framework for developing targeted policies and strategies that address the unique challenges of this region. Sub-regional reports have also been prepared for the Mekong, Insular South-East Asia and Central Asia sub-regions.



**Towards Inclusive Education: A Guideline**

The Dakar Framework for Action, under its section on “Challenges and Opportunities”, calls for inclusive approaches that must address “the needs of the poor and the most disadvantaged. In response to this issue, a UNESCO project developed by the UIS-AIMS Unit (Regional Office of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics) carried out analysis on the complex interplay of factors which result in exclusion. The study collected detailed information about education systems in selected countries where a specific commitment has been made to include children with disabilities in schools, in the national education process and in the monitoring process. The outcome of this project is *Towards Inclusive Education: A Guideline*, which provides guidance to all countries in the region as they move forward to include all children in their national education plans and implementation.



**Including the Excluded: A Lecture**

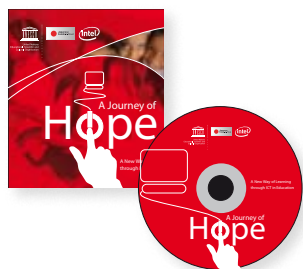
This lecture, delivered by UNESCO’s first Goodwill Ambassador from South-East Asia, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, provides insight into the challenges faced by minority hilltribe communities. It documents the work she has undertaken on behalf of these communities, and specifically discusses health promotion, special needs education, the role of religion in promoting education, and the importance of research and higher education. A unique personal account of her devotion to creating opportunities for all, *Including the Excluded* is an engaging look at how commitment to a cause can be translated into effective action.



**New UNESCO HIV and AIDS Clearinghouse**

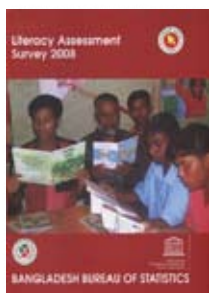
The new website provides users with a single online platform where resources and services of several former UNESCO clearinghouses have been put together. The new HIV and AIDS Clearinghouse offers a wide range of resources that cover the following themes: educational quality and access to education; content, curriculum and learning; teacher training and support; policy and management; and key populations. The site houses a regularly updated collection of over 4,600 records, which can be searched by theme or country. Latest publications, newsletters and

journal watch sessions are also popular features of the website. The website is maintained by the International Bureau of Education, the International Institute for Educational Planning, and the UNESCO Offices of Bangkok, Dakar, Harare, Nairobi and Santiago. Support is also provided by the UNAIDS UBW resource. Access to the HIV and AIDS Education website: <http://hivaidsclearinghouse.unesco.org>



### A Journey of Hope

UNESCO believes every child and adult has a right to education, and that learning should continue for life. *A Journey of Hope* bears witness to how information communication technology can be a tremendous tool in achieving our education goals. The DVD features experiences from the Intel® Teach Program, which trains teachers to integrate technology to promote problem-solving, critical thinking and collaboration skills among their students. The Intel® Teach Program has trained five million teachers in more than 40 countries, and is committed to train millions more in the future. The DVD, co-produced by the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and Intel Semiconductor Ltd., is a testament to the potential of ICT in engaging teachers and students in and outside the classrooms. Providing a new way of learning to many students, ICT can start them off on a journey of hope to a better and brighter future.



### UNESCO Dhaka

#### Literacy Assessment Survey 2008

Although Bangladesh has reaffirmed its commitment to EFA goals, much work remains in raising the country's adult literacy rates. As part of its on-going efforts to improve adult literacy rates, the Government of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UNESCO Dhaka undertook an assessment-based study of adult reading and writing skills, disaggregating collected data by literacy skill levels, geographical locations and gender. Results showed a clear correlation between literacy rates and poverty levels in the country. UNESCO expects this study to play a vital role in facilitating adoption of appropriate national policy and programmes.



### UNESCO Almaty

#### Central Asia EFA Report

With the 2015 target of meeting the Education for All (EFA) goals fast approaching, it is imperative for all concerned to focus efforts on reaching the unreached and the disadvantaged in education. This report, available in English and Russian, is a compilation of national reports specific to the Central Asia sub-region, covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The report provides a comparative assessment of progress towards EFA in this sub-region and aims to identify the remaining gaps in terms of quality and equity sub-nationally, with a focus on disadvantaged and excluded populations. It highlights the contextual background of education in the hope of providing a framework for developing targeted policies that address the unique challenges of the Central Asia sub-region. The results of the report will serve as a basis for strategy reviews to achieve EFA.

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UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) is the regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization whose work in the fields of education, natural science, social and human science, culture and communication has a bearing on the lives of almost two-thirds of the world's population in 47 member countries across the Asia-Pacific region.

The UNESCO office in Bangkok assumes two roles. As the Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, it is the technical advisory body to all field offices and Member States of the region and the site of regional programmes in most areas covered by the education sector.

As a cluster office, the UNESCO office in Bangkok is also the principal coordinator of UNESCO activities, across sectors, in the Mekong region - directly in Thailand,

Myanmar, Lao PDR and Singapore and indirectly in support of UNESCO country offices in Viet Nam and Cambodia.

UNESCO Bangkok also houses regional advisory units in Culture and Social and Human Sciences and staff from the Communication and Information Sector and the Science Sector.

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