



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Kathmandu
Office

PHOTOBOOK



UNESCO Director-General's Visit to Nepal 17-19 April 2016

Published by the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu

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KAT/2016/PI/H4

Foreword

From 17-19 April 2016, the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova visited Nepal at the government's invitation, to monitor the post-earthquake recovery process in the fields of cultural heritage and education. She also visited Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, as well as Tilaurakot where Buddha spent the 29 first years of his life. I feel honored and lucky having received her visit. This photobook is a record of the short but intense journey made by Ms Bokova, who tirelessly met with a large number of stakeholders and partners. Her visit efficiently strengthened our partnership with Nepal.

“UNESCO will accompany your efforts to rebuild, increase capacity and strengthen institutions”, this statement by Ms. Bokova demonstrates UNESCO's history of cooperation and strong partnership with Nepal. Her visit brought enormous publicity and visibility to the plights of the Nepali people, and most importantly to advance cooperation between UNESCO and all partners in post-earthquake rehabilitation.

Throughout the journey, I was amazed by the energy and commitment demonstrated by Ms. Bokova. Her down-to-earth, warm-hearted nature served as an inspiration to all those who were in contact with her.

This photobook is a testimony to UNESCO's efforts in different sectors in Nepal. During her mission, the Director-General launched two large projects – the UNESCO-Hainan project of recovery and Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage in Kathmandu and the UNESCO-UNFPA-UN WOMEN-KOICA Joint Program on Girls Education. Her personal presence boosted the commitment from the government and our development partners, and motivated staff to work further towards achieving our goals.

I believe the visit has resulted in significant impacts, which I hope will sustain and contribute to tighter cooperation between the government and UNESCO, for the benefit of the Nepali people.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all who have contributed in making the visit a successful and memorable one. Among them are the President, the Prime Minister, Ministers of Education and Culture, National Commission for UNESCO, Shikharapur and Tilaurakot Community Learning Centers, H.E. Ms Ambika Devi Luintel, Professor Robin Coningham, all colleagues of the UN Country Team, the International Scientific Committee for the Conservation and Management of Lumbini and last but not least our staff of the Kathmandu Office.



Christian Manhart

UNESCO Representative to Nepal



The Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova welcomed by the UNESCO Representative to Nepal, Mr. Christian Manhart when arriving at the Tribhuvan International Airport on 17 April 2016.

This was her first official visit to Nepal as the Director-General of the organization. She was also received by the the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO , Mr. Bishwa Prakash Pandit, the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, H. E. Ms Ambika Devi Luintel, tthe Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi, the Deputy Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO, Dr Kamleshwar Kumar Sinha, and the National Programme Officer of UNESCO, Mr. Tap Raj Pant.

The Director-General introduced to the Hon. Minister of Culture, Mr. Ananda Prasad Pokharel

The photo was taken before the launching of the UNESCO-Hainan project of recovery and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in Kathmandu on 17 April 2016 in Yak and Yeti Hotel





The Director-General giving a speech for the launching of the UNESCO-Hainan project of recovery and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in Kathmandu on 17 April 2016 in Yak and Yeti Hotel.

During the launch, she expressed solidarity with Nepal after the tragic earthquake which devastated the country in April 2015. She made a compelling statement on how culture bears the soul of the Nepali people and that the preservation of heritage is important for their identity and dignity.



The Director-General having a meeting with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) of Nepal on 18 April 2016 at the UN House.

She briefed about the purpose of her visit and encouraged the UNCT members to continue their efforts in supporting Nepal for post-earthquake recovery and rehabilitation. She also called for collaboration among UN agencies to address challenges in the country, especially on the issue of girls' education.

UNCT members welcomed the Director-General and were hopeful that her visit would boost Government of Nepal's commitment in addressing pre-existing inequality issues during post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation, in addition to strengthening school safety and Disaster Risk Reduction education.

The Director-General greeting the first woman President of the country, Ms. Bidhya Devi Bhandari in the President's residence in Shital Niwas on 18 April 2016.

The President pledged for political support in implementing the newly promulgated constitution, including the equal rights to women in the country. She called upon UNESCO's support for the empowerment of women through education and literacy, as the country's top priority towards sustainable development.



The Director-General's visit to the Prime Minister, Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli's Residence in Baluwatar on 18 April 2016.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister emphasized that post-earthquake recovery is not only a long-term process, but an opportunity to build differently, using new methods that tap into the ancestral knowledge and heritage of the Nepalese people. In response to the Prime Minister's request, UNESCO further commits to strengthen the capacity of people and institutions for implementing the Constitution and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which both aspire to fulfill fundamental human rights and leave no one behind.





The Director-General's meeting with the Hon. Minister for Education, Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel in Singha Durbar on 18 April 2016.

The Minister reflected the importance of education and highlighted that it is through education that the humanistic message of Buddhism can teach learners the path of peace and non-violence, through reflection, self-knowledge and understanding of our interdependence. The Director-General expressed her determination to raise global awareness of Nepal's needs, including at the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, and to share expertise in support of sustainable recovery and inclusive development.



The Director-General visiting the earthquake-affected World Heritage Site of Hanuman Dhoka and Basantapur Durbar Square on 18 April 2016.

Accompanied by representatives from the Department of Archeology and the local community, the Director-General curiously inquired into the reconstruction work being carried out in the area. UNESCO is providing support for reconstructing Basantapur Durbar Square, along with other monuments enlisted under the World Heritage.

The Director-General greeted by local women from the Shikharapur Community Learning Center (CLC) in Pharping on 18 April 2016.

Shikharapur CLC hosted the first pilot of Family Literacy Programme in Nepal under UNESCO's CapEFA Programme - "Building Capacities for Strengthening Literacy and Promoting Lifelong Learning in Nepal". The programme was scaled up to other villages in the Pharping region and has benefitted more than 240 mothers and their children from 6 villages. The programme also supported post-earthquake psychosocial activities, life skills training, CLCs learning and sharing workshop, disaster management training and primary health care training for CLC managers, etc.



The Director-General inaugurating the newly constructed Lifelong Learning Resource Center by Shikharapur CLC., together with a lifelong learner and the Executive Board Member of the CLC, Mr. Niroj Shrestha.

The center comprises a library, a computer laboratory and a multimedia room. Apart from the inauguration, the Director-General also attended a welcoming ceremony, in which she called for the support by men and leaders in the community for women to attain literacy.





The Director-General presenting gifts to Goma Devi Raut and her daughter, Manisha, who participated in the Family Literacy programme in Shikharapur CLC.

Being differently-abled, Goma was ostracized by her community in Diktel, Khotang. She came to Kathmandu in search of a better life, but was left by her husband after giving birth to her daughter. Despite all challenges, she remained resilient. Through family literacy, Goma has been able to learn about the importance of education, the need for a healthy lifestyle, sustainable environmental practices, and the rights of a woman, particularly of a woman living with disabilities.

When being asked about her ambition, young Manisha said that ‘I want to be a doctor because I want to help poor people!’ She was encouraged to finish her school and fulfil her ambition by the Director-General.



The launching of the UNESCO-UNFPA-UN WOMEN Joint Programming on Girls Education on 18 April 2016 by (from left) the Secretary-General of UNESCO, Mr. Bishwa Prakash Pandit, the Chief Secretary of Nepal, Dr. Somlai Subedi, the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, the Hon. Minister for Education, Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel, the UNESCO Representative, Mr. Christian Manhart, the UNFPA Representative, Ms Giulia Vallese, and the UN Women Representative, Mr. Ziad Sheikh.

The Joint Programme was the translation of the conviction that an integrated approach to education, gender equality and good health was necessary to empower adolescent girls and young women. The Director-General acknowledged the need to look beyond education and establish good linkage with health and income generation in order to holistically address factors causing drop outs of adolescent girls and young women from schools.

The Director-General conversing with Liu Changle, the CEO of Phoenix Television through his interpreter during the flight to Lumbini on 19 April 2016.

The Director-General made the trip on the third day of her stay in Nepal to visit the World Heritage Site of Lumbini, inspect archeological excavation in Tilaurakot and interact with the local communities.



The Director-General inspecting the archeological remains under Maya Devi Temple, an ancient Buddhist temple situated at the World Heritage Site of Lumbini, Nepal on 19 April 2016.

She gave assurances that UNESCO would continue to work with international and domestic parties to continue conservation efforts in the area, in recognition of its unique historical and spiritual heritage. “There is no need to choose between the conservation of historical remains and the development of Lumbini,” she said. “Heritage can be a driver to learn new skills and knowledge, to develop new capacity and foster sustainable development, decent jobs and livelihoods.” The excavation was headed by Robin Coppingham of Durham University, UK, and Kosh Prasad Acharya of the Pashupati Area Development Trust, Nepal.





The Director-General addressing the International Scientific Committee for the Conservation and Management of Lumbini during her visit to the World Heritage Site on 19 April 2016.

The International Scientific Committee comprises a panel of international experts in archaeology, conservation, the environment, heritage management, and urban planning, and representatives of Buddhist communities.



The Director-General greeting a child while arriving in Tilaurakot Community Learning Center in Tilaurakot, Lumbini on 19 April 2016.

Tilaurakot CLC hosted the mother-tongue literacy programme in Awadhi language supported by UNESCO's CapEFA Programme, including the publication of the required textbook entitled 'Mathani'. The number of participants in literacy classes has increased significantly as a result. Around 200 learners have already benefited from the programme. Other CapEFA programmes include HIV-related training to CLC facilitators, formation of peer educators groups for HIV-related programme, and writing and reading contest during International Literacy Day.

The Director-General addressing community members in Tilaurakot CLC during her visit.

She expressed great admiration for all the women and men who take the courageous decision to follow courses at the CLC and become a role model for their community. She further expressed commitment that UNESCO will continue to mobilize the international community for increased support to literacy.



The Director-General bidding farewell to UNESCO staff members prior to her departure flight on 19 April 2016 in Yak and Yeti Hotel.

The photo was taken after the press conference which concluded her visit to Nepal. During the event, she praised Nepal's hard work for enrolling maximum number of girl children to schools. She also hailed Nepal's achievement on the millennium development goals and its commitment for the vision 2030. She expressed her belief that Nepal will soon finish authentic assessment of destroyed cultural heritage sites and will reconstruct them very soon.





Group Picture taken in Yak and Yeti Hotel on 17 April 2016.



Group Picture in Shikharapur CLC on 18 April 2016



Group Picture in Tilaurakot CLC on 19 April 2016



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