



United Nations
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Radio drama gives hope

Life-saving advice to millions of **flood** victims



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Gender equality art competition generates thousands of entries

More than 3,000 drawings were received from 24 countries from Afghanistan to Bhutan for the 3rd annual UNESCO UNGEI

Gender Equality in Education Competition. The contest encourages young people from across the Asia-Pacific region to reflect on



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gender in education and on "how girls' and boys' equality in education benefits everyone".

Globally, two thirds of illiterate adults are women, and girls account for more than 50 per cent of out-of-school children. The drawings are appealing and often funny but have a serious message; they show that gender equality in education benefits both individuals and communities.

Winners are chosen by public vote and announced in early November 2011. Winning drawings from each country will be featured in the "Gender in Education Calendar 2012". This calendar is created by partners of the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia. It will be released in December 2011.

For further details, please email: Gender.bgk@unesco.org

Archive from the Asia-Pacific added to the Memory of the World Register

A documentary collection from Kazakhstan has been added to the Register of UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme. The Aral Sea Archival Fond consists of files from 1965 to 1990 that record the ecological disaster of the Aral Sea and the attempts to handle the situation. It is a unique fond of information for the study of the Sea of Aral and of how it came to shrink to 10 per cent of its size in the 1960s.

The Memory of the World Register now numbers a total of 245 documents and documentary collections from all over the world. It includes all types of material and support, including stone, celluloid, parchment, audio recordings and more.

Call for Entries: 2012 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

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Entries are now being accepted for the 2012 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. The awards recognize the achievement of the private sector and public-private initiatives in successfully conserving or restoring structures, places and properties of heritage value in the region. The deadline for receipt of materials is 31 March 2012.

Since the awards were established in 2000, UNESCO has received 426 entries from 24 countries. A total of 140 projects have received awards for high achievement in conservation, while five projects have received the Jury Commendation for Innovation.

In addition to the conservation awards, the "Jury Commendation for Innovation" will also be considered for newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding architectural design that is well-integrated into historic contexts.

To apply for the 2012 awards, please visit the awards website at: www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritageawards

Goodbye and Hello

The first editor's note for the VOICES newsletter marks its end as print magazine and its inception as e-newsletter. In this digital age and in times of financial turmoil, the print newsletter has become a remainder of the past and, as part of the UNESCO family, it shall now join its siblings in the digital environment.

For three years, since the first VOICES issue in January 2009, the print magazine was produced quarterly by the Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) team at UNESCO Bangkok and disseminated to partners, donors and the public in Asia and the Pacific and globally.

VOICES, although produced at UNESCO Bangkok, would not have been possible without hard work and extra efforts from all UNESCO Field Offices in Asia and the Pacific, namely, Almaty, Apia, Beijing, Dhaka, Hanoi, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kabul, Kathmandu, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Tashkent and Tehran. Our colleagues often for the first time stretched beyond their technical expertise into a world of journalistic writing. Their endeavour has opened doors for people to learn about UNESCO activities in Asia and the Pacific. They have immensely contributed to bringing the world together and to learn more about each other.

Sincere thanks for producing this colourful, appealing journalistic newsletter over the years go to the dedicated managing editor Ms Rojana Manowalailao, seconded by dynamic designer Ben Salapol, both backed by me as editor-in-chief, with kind support from the Director of UNESCO Bangkok Gwang-Jo Kim and Deputy Director Etienne Clément.

Let's now welcome and enjoy the newsletter: eVOICES UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific, our new monthly web-based regional newsletter as of January 2012. Using the network of our talented web editors and interacting with our websites and social network and multimedia resources, it shall become a valuable resource for anybody engaged and interested in UNESCO's activities in the region and beyond.

Thank you,

Dieter Schlenker

Chief
Information and Knowledge Management
UNESCO Bangkok



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Airwaves aid flood victims

Radio drama gives hope and life-saving advice to millions



© UNESCO/ S. Ansusinha



© UNESCO/ P. Jameel

It was at 8 pm on March 18 this year when UNESCO's radio drama series *Umeed e Sehr* (Dawn of Hope) was broadcast to millions of flood-affected people over the national airwaves in Pakistan for the first time in the country's history.

"We know we don't have resources, we don't even have food to eat, but at least we can pool our remaining resources to help the ones who are sick and more vulnerable than others," said one of the radio drama actors.

This was one of the underlying messages the radio drama sought to convey to the flood affected villagers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the Nowshera area of the country. The drama was produced and funded by UNESCO during last year's devastating floods.

For roughly five months, humanitarian workers were involved in a relief and early recovery period. The devastating floods left thousands of people homeless and millions of people displaced.

Those that had lost everything were confused and clueless about their future life and at the same time, the first episode of the *Umeed e Sehr* drama series was introduced in order to give these people some direction and much needed advice.

Director/Representative of UNESCO Islamabad Kozue Kay Nagata said: "The floods of 2010 were critical for Pakistan

although we were not able to be directly involved in emergency relief activities.

"However we were able to grab that situation to raise the public awareness level of Pakistani citizens as a whole towards the preparedness and mitigation issues of natural disasters, which had been negligent in Pakistan."

Similar post-disaster challenges were met and managed in certain parts of Afghanistan through a UNESCO project titled: "New Home New Life".

Using the success of that project, which helped stem depression in conflict-ridden areas, this UNESCO-assisted recovery and rehabilitative radio drama series that was broadcast free of charge, twice a week, by the Pakistan Broadcast Corporation (PBC), aimed to inspire Pakistani people to rebuild their lives with hope and a healthy determination.

The story of *Umeed e Sehr* revolves around a fictitious village called Sawan Pur where the characters face the same scenario of floods in Pakistan, and how from the midst of despair they are able to help themselves and suggest solutions to their audience in a healthy, positive manner.

This enables each episode to advocate one primary issue, and with related issues, give special attention to women and vulnerable people. For example, one of the episodes

focused on first aid care. Naureen, a main character in the radio series, convinced affected families to evacuate their flooded houses; give preference to vulnerable and old people first; and take shelter in safer places.

This episode also advised on how to give first aid to injured and sick people and how to be prepared when there is danger of further floods in low lying areas.

"Naureen is such a wonderful girl in the drama," said Rashida Batool, a keen listener to the broadcasts.

"I like her so much, and I can really relate to her. I'm amazed by her simple but powerful negotiation skills, when she has to convince the elders in her community," added the 18 year-old from Punjab province.

Naureen is a character of an educated and confident school teacher resident in the flood-affected village of Sawan Pur.

Another main character is the district coordination officer, a young man who is newly posted in the flood-affected area. The officer brings impressive solutions to the community by relying on the knowledge of the elderly people, as well as giving equal opportunities of participation to women in the rebuilding of the town.

He introduces the audience to the instruments and institutions of government and educates them on how to use official

“ We know we don’t have resources, we don’t even have food to eat, but at least we can pool our remaining resources to help the ones who are sick and more vulnerable than others. ”



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institutions to get help.

“It was actually through the drama when I first heard about cash for work and food for work schemes available for flood-affected communities,” said an unnamed community member.

“Soon after I knew about it, I started searching and asked my friends and neighbours about it. Later, I was able to help my family survive as I was rewarded with some cash while doing some masonry work,” he added.

Focus group listening sessions was a unique model integrated to gauge the level of impact and awareness that “*Umeed e Sehr*” was able to contribute to the communities.

Before the sessions, a moderator would talk to focus group participants on specific issues, to gauge their understanding of critical issues such as camp management; first aid; learning and teaching in disaster scenarios; and health problems.

Once the drama was finished, the moderator once again asked the participants the same questions and evaluated how the information delivered in the episode was able to increase their knowledge about these life-saving issues.

For example, in the focus group listening session on epidemic control, only two out of 18 persons knew about the dangers of waterborne diseases and the illnesses

attached to it.

After the drama, all 18 people were aware of the need to boil water before consumption and to take necessary steps in their camps to mitigate the danger of malaria and other diseases.

“I wish I knew about these diseases before as I might have been able to save some friends and neighbours who died after the flood due to malaria,” said Rehmat, 40, who was a participant in the focus group listening session in rural Punjab province.

Due to cultural factors for female community members, focus group listening sessions were organized in one of the resident’s houses in which only women were present.

“It’s great fun to hear the drama with all the neighbours, and then it was a blessing that for once there was someone with whom we could share our problems,” said Rukhsana Bibi, 33.

Twenty episodes, of 20 minutes each, were aired during a four-and-a-half-month period, with repeats, twice a week on Friday and Saturday night, over PBC national airways through 27 stations in all four provinces of: Baluchistan; Punjab; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and Sindh.

It would have been really hard to gauge how much this radio series reached its audiences but a text and phone call back facility to free toll numbers was bombarded during the whole broadcast period with feedback and suggestions from the audience throughout the country.

Adeel Hashmi, the director and scriptwriter of the episode found it extremely rewarding. He said: “When I was contacted to produce the drama, I found it very unusually challenging, as the characters were fictional but the information had to be very real.”

UNESCO contributed to the overall project by hosting a training session for the PBC in writing for drama on radio. The success of the programme has raised the possibility of the broadcast corporation working with UNESCO again on issues of development among poor and vulnerable communities, with a focus on mainstreaming inclusive education among children. V

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For more information about the radio series, please access: www.umeedesehr.com

Communities get louder voice in Heritage conservation

New strategy links preservation with socio-economic development goals



New high-rise developments and slums alike squeezing in on historic precincts.

Asia's heritage is disappearing, one building at a time, as bulldozers tear through old neighbourhoods in cities around the region to make way for condominiums, subway stations and shopping malls.

Even World Heritage towns and cities are not immune to these forces.

New partnerships and integrated approaches are needed to ensure that heritage is managed as part of the process of urban development.

Over the last two decades from 1990 to 2010, Asian cities grew by over 754 million people. Asian cities now have the highest population densities in the world. It is estimated that by 2015, Asian cities will be home to over 2.6 billion people; with the region having more urban dwellers than the rest of the world combined.

Most Asian cities have grown with little regulation. As a result, mixed land use is prevalent and physical form is uncoordinated: skyscrapers are built alongside low-rise, traditional buildings; factories and shops are interspersed among residential developments; and street vendors jostle for space with registered establishments. Infrastructure struggles to keep up with the pace of urban expansion.

The inaugural *State of Asian Cities Report*, recently released by UN-HABITAT and UNESCAP, points out that Asian cities face

interlinked crises of rapid urbanization, environmental sustainability, poverty and economic disparities, and increasing vulnerability to climate change and other disasters.

The report recommends that cities and towns in the region need to become more eco-efficient and green, more equitable and inclusive, and more resilient to climate change and other disasters.

The major transformations that are changing the face of Asian cities today also give rise to another challenge that has not been addressed by the UN report: how do we retain our cities' distinctive sense of place in the midst of rapid urbanization and globalization?

The loss of historic environments and the flux in urban populations are affecting the diverse social and cultural DNA that gives our cities their unique identities.

Many cities struggle in balancing new development with retaining the spirit of their historic and social contexts. This balance is especially critical in towns which have significant historic urban quarters in place.

In the Asian region, there are over 20 World Heritage towns and cities, and another 40 municipalities which host some of the world's most notable landmarks, ranging from the colonial shop house districts of

George Town, Penang, Malaysia, to the Mughal monuments of New Delhi, India.

Urban encroachment onto historic precincts is a common concern, with new high-rise developments and slums alike squeezing in on historic precincts. Meanwhile, residents struggle with antiquated and outdated urban services like water supply and sewerage, making historic neighbourhoods sometimes feel more like heritage slums than heritage sites.

The rapid physical, economic and social changes have also made it difficult to sustain cultural traditions that bring cities to life.

Khoo Salma Nasution of the Penang Heritage Trust said: "Community is the source of intangible heritage. To keep intangible heritage we have to keep community, and that means residents, along with traditional trades, livelihoods, festivals, associations and cultural practices."

"Many heritage preservation projects in South East Asia fail," said French architect Nathalie Lancret.

In many cases, there is a multiplication of uncoordinated stakeholders who do not share a common idea of what is the role of heritage in cities.

UNESCO is advocating an integrated approach to the conservation of heritage in cities through the "Historic Urban Landscape" concept. This idea extends the notion of "historic centre" to include the broader urban and geographical context, as well as associated social, cultural and natural values.

The approach integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation with the goals of social and economic development.

Ron van Oers of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre said: "It is as much about buildings and spaces, as about rituals and values that people bring into the city."

"This concept encompasses layers of symbolic significance, intangible heritage, perception of values, and interconnections between the composite elements of the historic urban landscape, as well as local knowledge, including building practices and management of natural resources."

In lieu of the conservation profession's previous tendency to freeze heritage areas in face of urbanization pressures, Mr. van Oers noted that the new concept's "usefulness resides in the notion that it incorporates a

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Award of Excellence



Top Left: Baojiatun Watermill, Guizhou Province, China ©Shixing Bao



Top Right: Sumda Chun Gonpa, Leh, Ladakh, India ©Namgyal Institute for Research on Ladakhi Art & Culture

capacity for change".

The Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation has been tabled at the UNESCO General Conference in October-November 2011. Once adopted, it will provide a framework and tools for this new integrated approach.

Within this integrated context, the role of public-private partnerships will become more important than ever, with the private sector, NGOs and communities having a louder voice in the way that cities are managed.

"Businesses and real estate developers have differing degrees of sensitivity to operating in a historic urban environment," said the Penang Heritage Trust's Ms. Nasution.

"A few are bleeding-heart conscientious about the urban fabric and a few are just outright cowboys, but the majority are in between," she added.

"Authorities need to work closely with local communities," said Bounnhang Phongphichit, Director of the Luang Prabang Heritage Department. By consulting with local residents, the authorities in this World Heritage town have successfully identified priorities in developing a masterplan for protecting ancient houses and temples.

In order to deepen the engagement with the private sector and residents, a combination of technical and financial support is needed.

In Penang, the state government has set up World Heritage Incorporated to provide adequate and appropriate advisory services to complement municipal building controls and regulations, while groups such as the Penang Heritage Trust and ThinkCity contribute technical and financial resources.

ThinkCity administers an innovative grassroots grants programme financed by the federal Malaysian government which was started in December 2009.

So far, 91 grants have been given to finance projects ranging from the restoration of clan halls to the revival of endangered trades. The programme has strengthened the commitment of local homeowners and shopkeepers to their historic town.

Manager of the grants programme Veronica Liew said that grantees "understand the cultural, historical and economic value of the World Heritage site. In fact, their re-investment into George Town is a mark of confidence that the historic city is liveable and is gradually going through a steady momentum of re-generation".

Even with the best intentions, good cooperation and adequate financing, a major obstacle that many historic cities and towns face is the lack of technical know-how in managing their historic urban assets.

In Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, fifteen years of overseas assistance from bilateral partners such as France, Japan and Korea, or multilateral agencies like the Asian

Development Bank, have helped to fill in local capacity gaps in heritage preservation, allowing authorities to tackle a range of issues from tourism management to wetlands protection, to the revival of traditional festivals.

Building up long-term institutions has proven to be the most sustainable approach. In Siem Riep, Cambodia, a heritage observatory has been set up to conduct research to improve safeguarding and management of the rapidly burgeoning town that is the gateway to the Angkor World Heritage site.

UNESCO has been helping to set precedents and standards to guide and inspire the conservation of cultural heritage properties in the region through the Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

UNESCO Bangkok's Tim Curtis said: "This awards programme is for good conservation practice."

Since its founding in 2000, UNESCO has received 426 entries from 24 countries, and awarded 140 projects. The winning projects demonstrate how historic buildings – ranging from old industrial warehouses to abandoned churches – can be restored and continue to have a life in contemporary urban contexts.

One of the 2011 winning projects was singled out for successfully transforming a decommissioned historic court house in Hong Kong into a vibrant arts college; SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) Hong Kong.

Offering an alternative to the practice of continual urban redevelopment in the crowded city, the project was undertaken as a pilot for a new municipal initiative to invest in reusing historic buildings.

The UNESCO Heritage Awards programme also showcases success stories for new buildings that are well-integrated into their historic contexts and that help to enhance the spirit of place.

One 2011 Jury Commendation for Innovation winner, the Sydney Harbour YHA and the Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre, is a 354-bed hostel built right in the heart of Sydney over one of Australia's most significant urban archaeological sites. Using an innovative engineering approach, the building barely touches the archaeological site, leaving it open for visitors' access.

The centre's Education and Interpretation Officer Alison Frappell said that visitors and guests have reacted enthusiastically to the building, finding that the location over an archaeological dig adds more interest.



Award of Distinction



Left: Altit Fort in Hunza, Pakistan ©Aga Khan Cultural Service of Pakistan



Award of Merit



Top: Serkhang Monastery, Qinghai Province, China ©Yutaka Hirako



Left: Scriptures Hall of Wat Thephidaram Worawihan Bangkok, Thailand ©Association of Siamese Architects



Honorable Mention



Top Left: SCAD Hong Kong (Former North Kowloon Magistracy Building), Hong Kong SAR, China ©SCAD Hong Kong

Top Right: Salarian Pavilion of Wat Kutao, Songkhla, Thailand ©Arsom Slip Institute of the Arts



Left: Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses, Bangkok, Thailand ©Crown Property Bureau



Jury Commendation for Innovation



Top Left: Sydney Harbour YHA and the Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia ©Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre



Top Right: Ma'anqiao Village, Sichuan Province, China ©Li Wan

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For more details, please access: www.unescobkk.org/culture

Degree of despair as cuts hit colleges

Financial crisis forces funding rethink

The worldwide financial crisis has exposed weaknesses in funding models for higher education in several Asia-Pacific countries.

The Education Research Network in the Asia-Pacific (ERI-Net), established by UNESCO Bangkok, completed an in-depth study on the "Impact of the Economic Crisis on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific". This investigation found structural cracks in the varying financial models for higher education, resulting in fiscal stimulus packages as well as important reforms.

In New Zealand, the financial crisis sparked rises in domestic enrolments and falls in full-fee-paying international students, severely threatening university finances. During the crisis the country had pursued an aggressive expansion of higher education, providing tuition subsidies, allowances, and loans for domestic students.

As a consequence, surging applications in 2009 resulted in massive over-enrolments of domestic students while declining numbers of full-fee-paying international students damaged university finances.

Philip Gunby and Nigel Healey of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand pointed out in the report: "New Zealand spends 42 per cent of its tertiary budget on student support, compared to an OECD average of 19 per cent."

The budgetary challenges were seen in higher education institutes across the region. Chinese universities encountered reductions in the market value of endowment funds and delays in promised

donations, while Malaysian funding for the higher education subsector decreased by almost twelve per cent in real terms from 2007.

In the Philippines, private universities encountered fiscal difficulties when international admissions declined and domestic students migrated to less expensive public higher education institutes. The Philippines government reduced the budget share for the higher education subsector in 2010, despite substantial migrations of students from private to public higher education institutes.

Jean Tayag, Director of the Office of Policy, Planning, Research, and Information at the Philippines Commission on Higher Education, noted that this "budget reduction could seriously hamper the higher education subsector's efforts to improve the quality of education provided and to produce globally competitive graduates".

Given the overall economic meltdown, Republic of Korea higher education institutes had to restrict rises in tuition fees, despite seeing enrolments fall for the first time since 1990. This decrease threatened to compromise the stability of the Republic of Korea's higher education sector, prompting substantial government intervention.

According to Jung-Mi Lee and Pil-nam Yi of the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), the 2009 budget for higher education was raised to 5.3 trillion KRW (in excess of 4 billion USD), with considerable funds devoted to subsidies for students from low-income brackets.

A range of measures were taken to shore up budgetary challenges in higher education

institutes. Hong Kong invested more than USD \$2.3 billion into an endowment fund, with bids for funds jointly assessed by the Research Grants Council, international scholars, and local business leaders.

Malaysian universities developed consultancy activities, short-term professional development courses, adult education classes, and off-shore programmes.

The Chinese government made a concerted effort to enact job-seeking assistance and entrepreneurship programmes, raising the 2009 employment rate of college graduates by five per cent over 2008.

Professor Changjun Yue of Peking University in People's Republic of China noted that the crisis was "both a challenge and an opportunity for China...[it] generated pressure for China to implement structural adjustments, thus providing an opportunity to change the education development strategy".

Input of the study was provided by researchers from Australia, China, Hong Kong (China), Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Molly Lee, Coordinator of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for Innovation in Bangkok, said the findings have been presented to policymakers "with the aim to raise awareness of higher education issues and to encourage evidence-based policy-making".



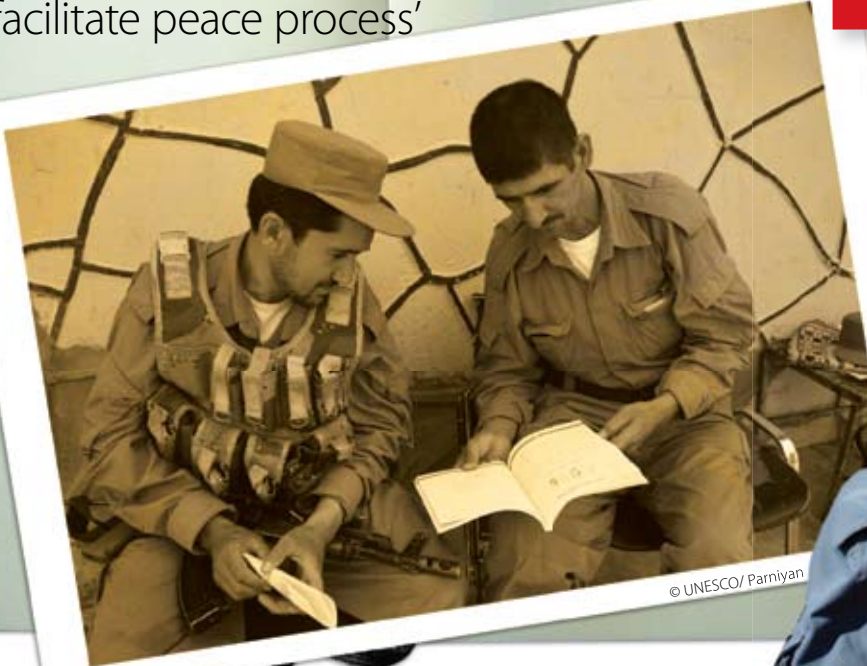
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Arming the Afghan police with literacy

Improved communication skills will 'facilitate peace process'



© UNESCO/ Parniyan

More than 70 per cent of the Afghan police force is hindered by illiteracy or low literacy levels.



© UNESCO/ Parniyan

Illiteracy is a big challenge for Afghan society where about three-quarters of the population is unable to read and write.

Three decades of war and the ongoing insecurity are blamed for widespread illiteracy and lack of access to education across the country.

The Afghan police force, which is tasked with bringing peace and security in very difficult circumstances, is compounded by the same levels of illiteracy among its personnel.

According to Afghanistan Ministry of Interior data, more than 70 per cent of the Afghan police force is hindered by illiteracy or low literacy levels.

Minister of Interior Besmellah Mohammadi said illiteracy is the biggest challenge for the Afghan police. "Tackling this problem is among our urgent priorities in the ministry," he said.

To address this issue, the UNESCO Office in Kabul, backed by funds from the Government of Japan, launched a new programme in June 2011 entitled: "Literacy for Empowering Afghan Police - LEAP".

The aim of this initiative is to provide literacy opportunities to 3,000 Afghan National Police officers in Kabul and seven

provinces across the country over the next 20 months.

It is hoped that greater literacy levels among police officers will contribute effectively in bringing peace and security to the country.

Mohammad Hasan, 25, a newly recruited police officer from Kabul province, believes that literacy is the key to doing his job well.

"Literacy will help me to understand better the training and develop better communications skills to work with people," he said.

As part of the programme, a comprehensive national literacy curriculum for the Afghan National Police will be developed. The curriculum will be used for any future literacy programmes for Afghan police.

"Building human resource capacity is a major issue which the Government of Japan believes is the foundation of any development," said Japan Ambassador to Afghanistan Reiichiro Takahashi.


"This new programme is a major step towards sustainable and effective development in Afghanistan's National Police human resources," he added.

Afghanistan is in a critical stage of its move

towards democracy and stability. While international troops are planning to leave the country by 2014, the Afghan National Police will play a crucial role in maintaining order and security in the country.

Many Afghan scholars believe that the transition process does not merely mean transferring sole military power from the international forces to the Afghans, but that it should also be a transition of responsibilities in both services and development fields.

A crucial step for that to happen is, of course, improving literacy and education levels.

UNESCO Kabul Director Shigeru Aoyagi said: "I believe, through LEAP, UNESCO with the Ministry of Interior, as well as the Ministry of Education and the Government of Japan will greatly contribute to building peace in Afghanistan and ensuring security and stability throughout the country." 

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Planting the seeds of literacy

Farming communities grow in strength through bi-lingual initiative

A rugged terrain, remote location, poor roads and a long civil war are conditions that have until recently isolated the Cambodian highlands province of Ratanakiri from the rest of the country.

Located in the far northeast, bordered to the north by the Lao PDR and to the east by Viet Nam, Ratanakiri is home to 130,000 people representing seven different ethnolinguistic groups including the Brao, Krung, Kravet, Tampuan, Kachok, Jarai, and Lao, as well as the Khmer who are the more recent arrivals.

In Ratanakiri, Taveng is ranked as one of the most difficult districts to access primary education. A limited number of villages which have primary schools face challenges of low enrolment rates, along with great difficulty retaining teachers.

Parents need their children to assist in agricultural and livelihood activities and the primary school calendar has not been adjusted to match the agricultural seasons.

This has had a profound effect on low primary school enrolment and completion rates, which affects overall literacy rates. In addition, it is difficult to retain proficient and effective teachers in Taveng due to the remote location and inconvenience of living in such an area.

In response, UNESCO has piloted a bilingual Non-Formal Education programme (NFE) through government education services in three villages in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of bilingual NFE to meet Education for All goals for remote districts in Ratanakiri.

“As a country with more than 20 different languages, bilingual Non-Formal Education is one of the most effective approaches to reach the most hard to reach populations

speaking different languages,” said Santosh Khatri, UNESCO Phnom Penh Education Specialist.

“This project, with a focus on the Brao ethnic minority group, is an example of targeting the marginalized groups as part of the drive to achieve Education for All goals in Cambodia by 2015. In addition to providing access to education, the bi-lingual approach has contributed to the preservation of local languages as well as improvements in the livelihoods of local community members, especially women and girls,” he added.

The project is a NFE programme scheduled to match the annual cycle of the agricultural season, with preparation and teacher training taking place at the beginning of the calendar year, so that the classes can start when the villagers are not busy in the fields.

Classes are held approximately nine months a year in the evenings, for two hours from seven to nine pm, with the schedule and location set by each community, based upon availability during the annual agricultural cycle.

The classes take place daily, five times per week, with no classes held during the busiest agricultural season of July, August and September.

Students include children, youth and adults aged 10 and up, but the majority range between the ages of 10 to 25. Of the 147 learners, 60 are female students.

NFE materials on literacy and numeracy skills have been developed, and the students are also taught important life skills, such as health, agriculture, community development and natural resource management.

Bilingual library materials have been developed in both the Brao and Khmer languages in topics ranging from traditional

stories to informational materials on malaria and health.

However, continuing efforts are ongoing to produce additional materials, as some of the minority languages have only recently been given a written format.


Teachers come from the community and receive training organized by International Cooperation Cambodia and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS).

The trainees are 10 literacy volunteer teachers (two females), two literacy class monitors and three village chiefs. They work collaboratively with other teachers to hone their skills in effective teaching and all continue to show more confidence in their instruction skills.

Aside from raising literacy rates in villages, the programme also builds capacity among ministry staff. For example, national and provincial staff increase their awareness of the value of the bilingual education approach through site visits, on-the-job training, conducting workshops and hosting study visits.

The villagers and local authorities are keen to learn and can see that it is useful for them and their communities for further development.

These positive developments are testimony to the project’s contribution to literacy improvement in the rural, remote and ethnic minority regions of Ratanakiri, Cambodia.

While this triangle cooperation among UNESCO, NGO and MoEYS, with the close participation of communities, proves effective, it is very important to have continued support from the MoEYS, whose commitment needs to be encouraged even after the end of the project in 2012. 

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Blueprint for revitalising historic districts

Indian planning students brainstorm new approach to urban renewal



▲ Enhancing public spaces and urban environment is key to a successful revitalisation process



▲ Overlapping of heritage, urban poverty and slums are some of the most prevalent issues in many urban districts throughout India.

Do link historic districts with the wider urban and regional development programmes.

Do put local communities at the heart of revitalisation projects.

Do not evict the local population, or develop tourism as the sole economic activity for revitalisation.

These key findings emerged from a recent UNESCO lecture that gave 100 university students the opportunity to learn and share their ideas about the best ways to revitalise historic districts in India.

The lecture, held at the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, was part of dissemination efforts of the UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Toolkit on *Historic Districts for All – India: a Social and Human Approach for Sustainable Revitalisation*.

This initiative aims to contribute to urban public policies which respect, protect and promote inclusiveness, social cohesion and local democracy.

The audience at the lecture consisted of first year master's students in urban planning, from a wide range of academic backgrounds such as planning, architecture, geography, engineering and economics, reflecting UNESCO's will to develop multi-disciplinary knowledge on the issue of sustainable revitalisation of districts.

Marina Faetanini, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, at the UNESCO

New Delhi Office, and Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, International Urban Consultant, highlighted the challenges, priorities, and success factors of developing a rights-based approach to urbanisation in India.

Dr. Suri pointed out at the lecture that a revitalisation process based on a "continued emphasis on architecture and spatial morphology" is detrimental to a people-centered approach.

Besides the lecture, students took part in a visioning exercise based on a fictitious case study about a growing Indian metropolis containing a historic core. The case study contained critical issues that can actually be found in districts throughout India, such as a mix of native and migrant populations, dilapidated infrastructure, overcrowded spaces, a large homeless population and a major tourist presence.

The students then formed groups, with each group given a specific task corresponding to the four steps of the revitalization method. Group one made a diagnosis of the historic district based on an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Group two proposed a vision for the revitalisation of the historic district. Group three was responsible for the action planning, which included identifying priorities of intervention, major objectives and outputs, stakeholders, and possible risks. Group four suggested quantitative and qualitative indicators for

monitoring and evaluation.

Each group had to prepare their proposal, as well as explain and justify this proposal in a presentation. One student group member even argued for a "complete change of paradigm" in the revitalisation process by setting new priorities, such as encouraging the participation of migrants and maintaining traditions. The involvement of the private sector instead of just relying on governments and international organizations was also suggested by other students as a way of funding revitalisation projects.

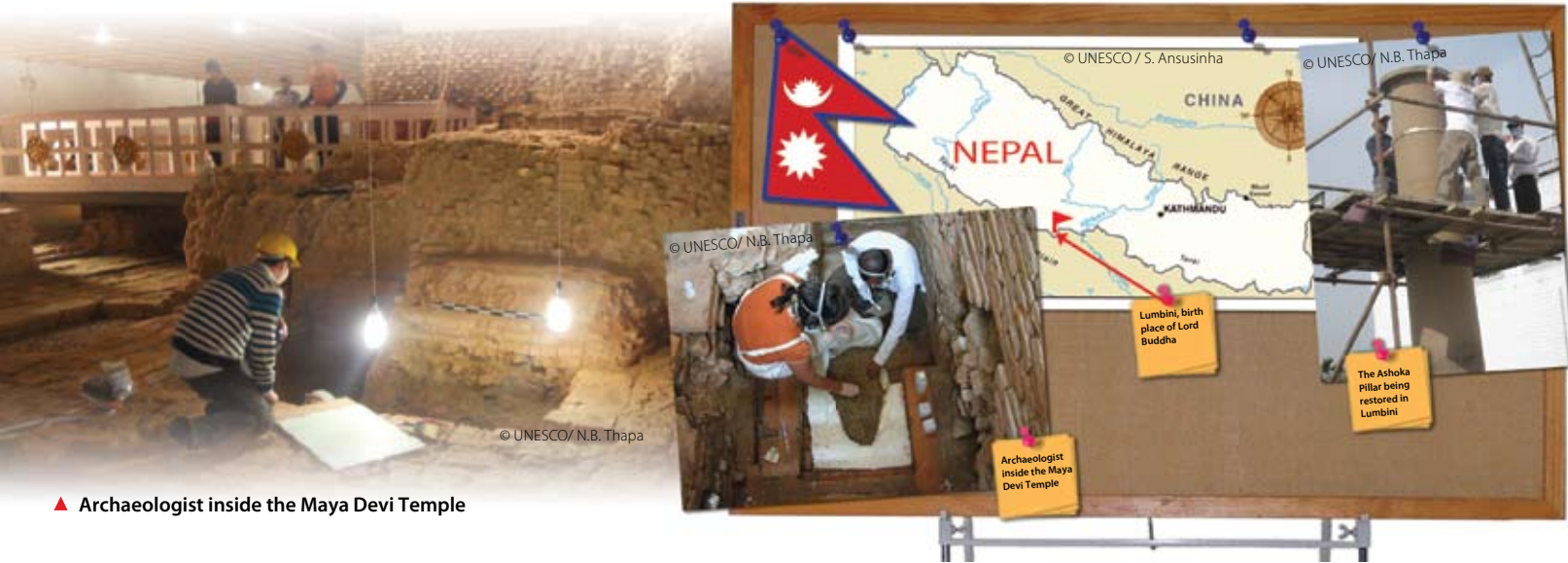
Upon completion of the exercise, each student received a copy of the UNESCO/UN-HABITAT Toolkit on *Historic Districts for All – India: a Social and Human Approach for Sustainable Revitalisation*, as well as copies of the MOST Policy Paper on *Urban Policies and the Right to the City: Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship*, and the UNESCO/UN-HABITAT publication on *Best Practices on Social Sustainability in Historic Districts*.

The lecture and associated activities marked the first steps in a consolidation of the UNESCO/UN-HABITAT approach to socially sustainable planning in Indian historical urban areas through improvements to the curriculum of schools of planning and architecture. The next steps in this process aim to produce content and a syllabus for a new course specifically designed for schools of planning and architecture in India. ✓

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Research to cast light on Lord Buddha's birth date

Scientific dating to unlock events of historical and religious magnitude



▲ Archaeologist inside the Maya Devi Temple

A UNESCO project to conserve Lumbini's most symbolic monuments will introduce new scientific evidence into the debate surrounding the birth date of Lord Buddha.

Lumbini, the birthplace of the founder of Buddhism, is located 300-km southwest of the capital Kathmandu and was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997.

The surrounding buffer zone around the sacred site is contained within a levee and has an area of approximately a quarter of a sq-km. This area is known as the Sacred Garden of Lumbini.

The inscribed property is embedded in the larger area of the master plan created by Japanese architect Kenzo Tange in 1978, under a proposal initiated by former UN Secretary General U Thant.

As a global pilgrimage site, the Government of Nepal conferred the implementation of the Master Plan to the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT).

However, after more than thirty years of formulation and due to a number of complex issues, including a lack of technical and financial resources and the political instability of the country, the master plan has still not been finalized.

These issues have generated a number of problems over the years, one of the most prominent being the construction of the controversial so-called Maya Devi Temple, built in 2002 to protect the archaeological remains surrounding the Marker Stone.

The World Heritage Committee (WHC) has

repeatedly criticized the construction and requested Nepal to rectify the negative impact on the ruins contained inside.

After two International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)/WHC missions in 2004 and 2005, the WHC in 2006 requested Nepal to establish an Integrated Management Plan for Lumbini.

The situation has been exacerbated by the deteriorating condition of the Ashoka Pillar, the Marker Stone, the Nativity Sculpture and ruins within the Maya Devi Temple.

The Ashoka Pillar, erected by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka in 249 BC, has an inscription which testifies to Lumbini as Lord Buddha's birthplace. The image of Maya Devi (the mother of Lord Buddha) at the time of his delivery is also known as the Nativity Sculpture. The Marker Stone, which is said to bear Lord Buddha's footprint, indicates the spot where he was born. Moreover, there is a real need for additional archaeological investigations to determine the planning activities for the area.

A UNESCO project "Strengthening the Conservation and Management of Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha, World Heritage Property" was launched in August 2010, with the objective to conserve the three most emblematic monuments, namely, the Ashoka Pillar, the Marker Stone, and the Nativity Sculpture, and to acquire better knowledge about the archaeological remains for their long term conservation, protection and presentations.

In addition, the project intends to review

the present state of the Sacred Garden, with respect to the "Kenzo Tange Master Plan" and establish an integrated management plan and train staff to better manage the site.

"The preservation and development of Lumbini are important not only for Nepal, but also for all humanity and this project is a significant step forward that will enable the Government of Nepal to reinforce its effort in the protection, enhancement and sustainable development of Lumbini," said Axel Plathe, head of the Kathmandu Office and the UNESCO Representative to Nepal.

A team of archaeologists from Durham University, UK are working with their counterparts from Nepal on an archaeological investigation within the World Heritage Site and the adjacent buffer zone in order to proceed with the planning of the Sacred Garden.

Team leader Robin Coningham, Professor of Archaeology at Durham University, said the project offers a unique opportunity to investigate some of the earliest developmental phases of one of the world's great religious traditions, dating back as early as the 5th Century BC. The programme will also introduce new scientific evidence into the debate surrounding Lord Buddha's birth date.

UNESCO Advisor Kosh Prasad Archarya said: "Since there are different opinions regarding the exact date of Buddha's birth, which varies from the 7th to 5th century BC, the precise scientific dating of the brick and soil samples collected from Buddha's birthplace



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“The preservation and development of Lumbini are important not only for Nepal, but also for all humanity.”

▲ (Above) The Nativity Sculpture of Lord Buddha, depicts Maya Devi with her right hand holding on to a sal tree with a newborn child standing upright on a lotus petal, shedding an oval halo, around his head

is expected to shed new light on this issue.”
 In the first year of the project, the team focused on the evaluation and interpretation of the three main areas of the World Heritage property, namely: the Maya Devi Temple; the Sacred Garden; and the Village Mound.

The archaeologists cleaned and photographed the 3rd Century BC Mauryan structures contained within the temple and took scientific samples in order to confirm the date of the structure and investigate its character and sequence of development.

The team mapped existing monasteries, stupas and other religious monuments surrounding the temple and conducted a geophysical survey to record additional monuments not visible on the surface. The data aims to facilitate research without damaging the valuable archaeological remains.

The team also excavated the Village Mound, south west of the Maya Devi Temple, which is South Asia’s earliest named village, known as Lumbini Game, as recorded on the Ashoka Pillar.

The team has catalogued about 62,000 archaeological artefacts, including 30 antiquities discovered during the first season of excavation.

“The archaeological investigation in Lumbini has identified early, possibly, a pre-Mauryan period of occupation and the awaited results of the brick dating and soil sample analysis will provide a more precise date and nature of the earliest occupation layers,” said Professor Coningham.



▲ The Ashoka pillar, built by Emperor Ashoka in 249 BC. It is believed to be the birth place of Lord Buddha.

The next two years of survey will focus on an evaluation of the other un-surveyed areas of the Sacred Garden and an evaluation of the topography of the Pre-Mauryan (4th Century BC) levels in the Maya Devi Temple and outside within the Sacred Garden.

Suresh Suras Shrestha, Nepal’s Department

of Archaeology archaeological officer, said: “This is a great opportunity to engage in innovative scientific techniques which will allow us to unlock the details of the events and occupations that took place during the birthplace of Buddha.”

UNESCO has made a proposal to the Government of Nepal to establish an International Expert Committee for the Safeguarding of Lumbini. The experts on the committee will provide advice for the safeguarding and promotion of Lumbini and other historical sites related to the life of Lord Buddha in the Greater Lumbini area.

Venerable Bhaddamanika, a meditation teacher in Lumbini, said: “The tranquillity, sanctity, spiritual integrity, and universality of the Buddha’s birthplace are very important. Therefore, the ongoing preservation project, which is according to the Master Plan, needs to be respected, which will benefit all of us.”

Two other sites in the vicinity of Lumbini are Tilaurakot, the archaeological remains of the ancient Shakyas Kingdom; and Ramagram, the relic stupa of Lord Buddha, which are both on the tentative list Nepal intends to consider for World Heritage status.

UNESCO’s Mr. Plathe said: “Culture can be a vehicle for the sustainable development of the local community and the cultural and archaeological assets of Lumbini can accelerate the development of the entire Greater Lumbini area.”

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Samoaan Youth Voyaging

Gualofa on the open ocean under traditional rig, the solar panel is to power an outboard motor as a backup

© Rui Camilo



Samoa today is a country of many voices, of many narratives that want to steer the country into the future. Like in many other countries, young Samoans are confronted with a myriad of conflicting influences, expectations and responsibilities.

But what makes Samoa quite different is that there is a significant lack of sites where young people are given the opportunity to make sense of and navigate their brave new world. Targeting Samoan youth for the voyaging programme of the Aiga Folau O Samoa – Samoa Voyaging Society (SVS), thus seemed more than fitting.

The SVS voyaging programme is part of a strong movement that aims at educating and training new generations of traditional boat builders and navigators. Since the 1980s, the Pacific has seen a wonderful renaissance of traditional boat building and sailing, which, because of its value to the environment, drew the attention of many organisations.

The movement was boosted tremendously in the course of the last decade as Okeanos, an international philanthropic organisation based in Germany, got on board. In 2009

Okeanos commissioned the building of a fleet of seven 22 metre double-hulled traditional ocean voyaging canoes, called “va’a” in Samoan, or “vaka” in Maori. The Gualofa is the youngest of them, which the SVS received in late 2009.

In their search for a crew for the Gualofa the SVS had many encounters with young, able-bodied Samoans, who were initially unable to formulate any personal aspirations or ambitions for why they wanted to be on the va’a. This was partially due to a minimal command of English. But it was also the result of the traditional village environment where strict hierarchies exist and young people are not expected to reflect much or even express their wants and needs.

One of the greatest achievements therefore was that after three months of hands-on training on the Gualofa many of the young crew were already able to find words to describe the change the voyaging programme had brought to their life.

One of them is Faapa’u Feliua’i. “The biggest change in my life now,” says Faapa’u, “is no more drugs, marijuana, no smoke, and

[I] am able to respect others, eat proper food, meaning balance diet and be clean all the time. Before my involvement with the va’a, I used to take drugs, do the plantation for my family, walk the street with friends, pick up girls, often take the bus to town just to find trouble, [I] never thought there is another life like now.”

Communication also improved from the other side. Marc Gondard, SVS skipper of the Gualofa, remembers his first frustrating attempts at translating knowledge from one life world into another.

“The challenge was how to get concepts and ideas from a Western mind expressed in English, through to a Samoan mind,” he says. It quickly became apparent to him that the experience of voyaging itself became the site where “the abstract” could meet “the real.” Here, abstract concepts about sailing and the environment would become tangible and real for the young crew.

“Only then was it possible to talk about and refer to a common experience to express ideas,” says Gondard.

The abstract met the real and the real

led to noticeable changes in behavior. Day skipper Faleofani (Fani) Bruun has come to witness this. "Before you would see crew members with no concern for where they threw their rubbish – now they actually hold on to the piece of rubbish until they can find a way to properly discard it," she says.

Fani is of Samoan and Danish descent. Like others on the va'a, she straddles the Fa'a Samoa and another world, navigating a complex and productive way of life out of the diversity of the cultures she inherited.

"I have learnt patience, respect for the vast ocean, respect for my ancestors in voyaging and braving the elements," says Fani.

Currently, the Gaulofa is in California, together with other va'a. They are approaching a well-deserved break. Since March 2011, our Samoan youth have been voyaging the Pacific Ocean discovering and reliving Pacific voyaging tradition and, thereby, joining more and more pieces of the puzzle that is their heritage and new life. And they talk about it.

Every few days one of them sits down between shifts, in the middle of day or night, somewhere in the Pacific, surrounded by the smell of sea life or oil rigs or the next meal being cooked up by another crew member and they type their thoughts, impressions and questions about the world into a computer. And the SVS posts them on to the internet.

The stories they share are the greatest reward for those who have dreamt of the va'a for decades, those who have worked and still are working many hours in the back to keep this dream alive. Of many other things, the SVS voyaging programme has given Samoan youth space to reflect - and they use it.

These new voices tell stories of adventure and of wonder. They also express bewilderment and sadness, frustration and sometimes even anger. All of these voices have in common that they express a need for answers to question that concern these young Samoans: Why are there less fish in the sea? Why is there so much garbage instead? How can gut-wrenching stinky oil rigs and Blue Whales co-exist?

They are asking themselves and they are asking others. Aside from writing for diverse websites these young Samoans give talks at schools and yacht clubs. They offer stories to families and friends. They appeal to politicians and representatives of other nations.

Once an abstract idea, taking responsibility for the environment and navigating the Pacific on a traditional va'a have become real experiences. Now real experiences become stories that inspire and will continue to inspire others. The SVS is filled with pride for this achievement. V

“ Why are there less fish in the sea? Why is there so much garbage instead? How can gut-wrenching stinky oil rigs and Blue Whales co-exist? ”

For more information about the voyaging programme and for stories from the Gaulofa visit www.samoavoyagingsociety.blogspot.com and www.pacificvoyagers.org

Story written by Angela Kölling, a member of the Samoa Voyaging Society. Quotes from the crew are taken from SVS report "Voices from the Va'a" (UNESCO April 2011).



▲ Teaching schoolchildren about traditional navigation is an important role for SVS
© Marc Gondard

▲ Aiga Folau crew on the Voyage from Apia, Samoa for Tokelau
© Marc Gondard

© S. Anusinha

High-tech approach to heritage preservation

Mapping technology increases protection awareness

A pioneering new initiative has been conducted in Bukhara, Uzbekistan to safeguard the ancient city's cultural heritage and ensure that modern social and economic development is implemented with a sympathetic eye on the past.

To achieve these aims, four analytical field surveys involving condition assessments of residential, municipal and historic buildings were conducted in Bukhara from September 2008 to June 2011. It was the first time this type of investigative work was carried out in one of Uzbekistan's four World Heritage destinations.

Bukhara is situated on the Silk Route and is over 2,000 years old. It is the most complete example of a mediaeval city in Central Asia, with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact. Monuments of particular interest include the famous tomb of Ismail Samani, a masterpiece of 10th-century Muslim architecture, plus a large number of 17th-century madrasas.

Bukhara has 462 historical monuments and was listed on the World Heritage List in 1993. It is one of four UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Uzbekistan, along with Samarkand, Shakhrisabz and Khiva.

With a history dating back nearly twenty-five centuries, Bukhara's ancient heritage has been preserved and integrated into the modern urban fabric of the contemporary city. Bukhara's mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums, along with the city's pristine turquoise cupolas, attract visitors from all over the world.

The city has absorbed multiple architectural influences over time and this architectural heritage has been carefully preserved and integrated into an overall model that is harmonious and well balanced.

In addition, 98 historical houses and over 40 municipal buildings are under state protection and these assets further contribute to the rich heritage of this historical city. Besides its rich architecture, urban fabric and monuments, Bukhara is also known for its thriving arts scene and spiritual culture.

Consequently, this tangible and intangible cultural heritage needs to be fully protected and preserved as an asset for both the local population and cultural visitors.

The World Heritage Committee requires every World Heritage Site to have a management plan that controls issues such as infrastructure development, which must remain sympathetic to the integrity of the city.

The management plan must also provide guidance over water management and the sustainable consumption of natural resources in order to develop good governance strategies and permit integrated development of internal city infrastructure such as roads, sewage systems, electricity and telephone lines, without disturbing or negatively affecting historical structures.

Within the framework of the UNESCO Tashkent Office Regular programme; "Enhance the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage by strengthening the importance of safeguarding the cultural heritage", four field surveys were conducted. The overriding

aim is that traditional construction has to be preserved for future generations.

"The field surveys in Bukhara allowed us to systemize all the historical, as well as recent information on the city," said Professor Shukur Askarov of Tashkent Architectural Institute and the team leader of the UNESCO surveys in Bukhara.

"In particular, it permitted us to get a new vision for Bukhara's growth and its major future direction. The studies have collected unique up-to-date information on the historical city's residential stock.

"Diagnosing the present status has contributed very positively to Bukhara's management plan as the investigation work revealed many shortcomings in the conservation of the city's historical layout and monuments of architecture," he added.

The four field surveys contributed to the creation of an inventory and an integrated database of historically and culturally

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▼ Medersa Mir-u-Arab





© UNESCO / C. Coussonnet

▲ Iwan, with bolor and tokcha-bandi

valuable objects in the historic centre of Bukhara, based on GIS technologies.

In this process of documentation, GIS is the perfect tool that enables the user to include information about historical sites; thereby providing a degree of heritage interest and the physical environment of such objects.

This provides very precise digital maps, along with details on social and living conditions of residents. Evaluating cultural heritage resources will help the development of various strategies for short and long-term programmes for the conservation management of Bukhara.

Condition assessments surveys also focused on an upgraded list of high heritage historical buildings and this exercise identified 600 buildings of high historical interest that are currently not under state protection. These properties include residential homes dating back to the 19th century that contain rich design features of

that era including richly decorated ceiling beams and alcoves. It is important that these houses are preserved.

Mr. Kadirov Kahramon, specialist of the Board of Monuments, the national institution responsible for the protection and preservation of cultural tangible heritage in Bukhara said: "In future, we should carry out active work to raise the population's awareness, through radio and television, on the importance of the conservation of cultural heritage sites, especially houses that are cultural heritage sites too.

"Also, within the education field, be they schools, colleges and institutes, there is a necessity to raise awareness on the protection of cultural and historical heritage sites in Bukhara." ✓

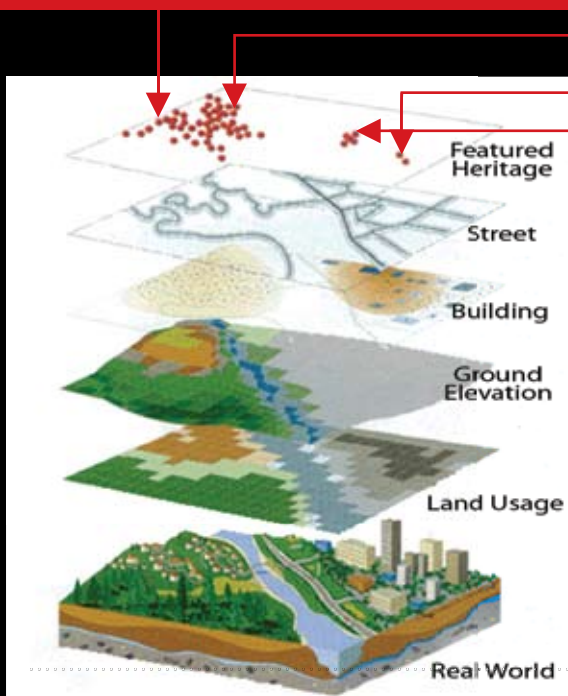
Contact: c.coussonnet@unesco.org



► Liabi-Haouz and the Khanaka Nadir Divanbegi, with hundred-year-old mulberry tree



© UNESCO / C. Coussonnet



GIS : Graphic Information System



© UNESCO / C. Coussonnet



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▲ Details of paintings
▶ Nim-iwan

NOTE: The information presented here are for simulation purpose only, it does not indicate the location of the actual heritage site.

Teaching happiness

Bhutan's 'wellbeing' concept essential part of curriculum



Happiness can be achieved in two ways: firstly by physical wellbeing; and secondly, by inner peace and contentment.

The concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH), the term coined by Bhutan's former King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, is widely accepted by the people of Bhutan as an indicator that measures the quality of life or social progress in more holistic and psychological terms than Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

GNH is based on the belief that the purpose of development and the role of the state is to create conditions within which people can pursue and find what they aspire to most in life: Happiness.

GNH suggests that the beneficial development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occurs side by side to complement and reinforce each other. There are four pillars of GNH: the promotion of sustainable development; preservation and promotion of cultural values; conservation of the natural environment; and the establishment of good governance.

In Bhutan, value education is part and parcel of the school curriculum to prompt the importance of education to create awareness on topics related to culture, GNH, and the environment. This programme was introduced to impart values to students, under the Ministry of Education, with the ultimate goal of promoting peace and bringing harmony to society.

To this end, various useful literary activities and games are utilized, and furthermore,

each class is allotted "one value education period" per week. In these periods, students are taught important lessons ranging from life's values to other pressing issues that beleaguer the community and society.

The school prepares a yearly lesson plan and teachers work according to the plan, notwithstanding some degree of flexibility at times. Furthermore, in order to make value education schooling more effective and sophisticated, we equip our teachers with advanced awareness through training and refresher courses.

Important measures, such as monitoring and feedback, are carried out by the school administration.

Co-curricular activities are an important facet of our value education system and it is only through these activities that students get a chance to pave their career paths in life. In order to make sure that every student gets an equal opportunity to participate in these activities, the system has been compartmentalized.

Under this rule, the school administration categorizes four fraternities of students and each fraternity has two monitors to oversee the activities being carried out. Among these fraternities, a myriad of activities such as debate and extempore speech competitions, quizzes, cleaning and gardening work are carried out.

For example, gender equality, promotion of culture, or tourists in Bhutan can be important debate topics. GNH is included in most of these activities to hone student's

knowledge of GNH. Through such activities students learn the importance of preserving the exquisite environment, unique culture, and the concept of GNH.

In order to achieve the mission of improving the quality of education, a survey is conducted every year in the local community to identify children not being admitted to school and the possible reasons for this. During the surveys, a questionnaire is distributed among respondents highlighting the importance of education in our society.

At times, we persuade parents to send their children to school and lecture them on the benefits of education, both in the short and long term. In a similar vein, parent-teacher meetings are conducted regularly to ensure that parents give the necessary support to their children and to make sure that every child attends school.

Sometimes we lecture parents on proper nourishment for children and the importance of giving ample home study time. In recent years, the literacy rate of our country has soared and the drop-out rate has plummeted dramatically. This trend of improvement could be partly attributed to the aforementioned activities carried out in our school and elsewhere.

Promoting GNH in our schools is still the main topic in the value education class.

One of the four pillars of GNH is the preservation of culture and heritage. The concept of GNH emphasizes collective happiness; this is where the happiness of each person is enhanced by the appreciation of interdependence. We are convinced that happiness can be achieved in two ways: firstly by physical wellbeing; and secondly, by inner peace and contentment.

Our physical wellbeing can be achieved through economic prosperity and the equitable distribution of wealth, whilst inner peace and contentment can be achieved

The opinions and views expressed in the Guest Column are purely those of the writers and in no way reflect the opinions or views of UNESCO. We accept no responsibility legal, or otherwise for the accuracy, or truth of comments made in the Guest Column.




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through knowing our own mind and being considerate.

We believe that inner peace can be achieved through meditation. Meditation is all about training our mind. It is about having peace of mind and making ourselves aware of our inner thoughts and emotions.

Psychological wellbeing is one of the main domains of GNH. This wellbeing is considered an important component of being mentally healthy and promotes inner peace. It is strongly believed that we can achieve psychological wellbeing through practicing our religion (Buddhism in the case of Bhutan).

Buddhism is highly valued by the people of Bhutan. To instil religious values, students are taught at school and at home about the importance of religious teachings. Teachers meditate with students before the first class begins; immediately after lunch; and before the school day ends. We have also made it standard practice to have a short meditation period at the beginning and end of every staff meeting.

Religious discourse is arranged with the aim of creating inner peace. The school also invited a monk to deliver religious discourse for staff and students in order to make them more mindful in their conduct and behaviour. Some parents and community members who are interested can also take part in this discourse. 



Rinzin Wangmo is currently the Principal of Yonphula Lower Secondary School in Trashigang, Eastern Bhutan. Ms. Wangmo is the first Bhutanese educator to win the UNESCO award for best practices in Education for International Understanding (EIU). She is among five educators in the Asia-Pacific region to win the award. The rest are from Pakistan, Philippines, Malaysia and Uzbekistan. The best practices will be published as a monograph and distributed to educators in the Asia-Pacific region.

Every year, The Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) selects four to five cases of good practices on EIU from 47 member states in the Asia-Pacific region. Established in 2000, APCEIU aims to integrate individuals, communities, nations and international global systems and foster a sustainable relationship between humanity and nature, based on UNESCO guidelines.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Workshop on the Ratification of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention

APIA, SAMOA
13-14 February 2012
Contact: a.takahashi@unesco.org

National Workshop on a road map for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Nepal

LALITPUR, NEPAL
16 December 2011
Contact: n.shakya@unesco.org

Lumbini World Heritage Site: Integrated Management Plan workshop

LUMBINI, NEPAL
17-18 January 2012
Contact: n.shakya@unesco.org

Fourth Youth Peace Ambassador Training Workshop

HIROSHIMA, JAPAN
29-31 March 2012
Contact: d.macer@unesco.org

Asia Media Summit

BANGKOK, THAILAND
29-30 May 2012
Contact: s.ornager@unesco.org

Fifth Memory of the World Committee for Asia Pacific (MOWCAP) meeting

BANGKOK, THAILAND
12-14 March 2012
Contact: s.ornager@unesco.org

Workshop on Strengthening Journalists' capacities on human rights reporting with focus on gender equity

BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA
December 2011
Contact: m.aguirre-idiaquez@unesco.org

International Workshop on Fostering Livelihood and Social Resilience for Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region

BALI, INDONESIA
December 2011
Contact: m.aguirre-idiaquez@unesco.org



South Asian Regional Conference: Responding to the needs of Out Of School Adolescents - Experiences of South Asian Countries

This report stems from the South Asian Regional Conference: Responding to the Needs of Out Of School Adolescents that took place on 1-3 March 2011 in New Delhi, India. The publication combines selected best practices, the conference report and recommendations on how to respond to the needs of out-of-school adolescents in South Asia.



Parenting Education Guidebook & Facilitators' Handbook for Parenting Education.

The two books on parenting education aim to raise awareness on the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education ECCE and the crucial role caregivers play in a child's health, development, learning and development. The Guidebook provides essential, practical information about ECCE for all caregivers. The Facilitators' Handbook is for facilitators who guide parenting education programmes and outlines strategies for teaching and learning and guidelines for conducting Parenting Education workshops.



Overlooked! Let's Know Thyself!

This study identifies the cultural and social factors that influence HIV transmission and health-seeking behaviours of young people in Bangladesh. It analyzes those contexts in which young people likely engage in risky sexual behaviours. The study concludes with the recommendation to better mainstream sexuality issues into education systems to help young people to protect themselves from HIV, to maintain good health, and to support gender equality.



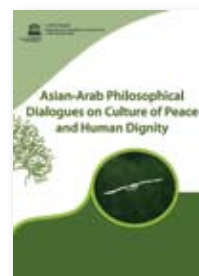
The Nan Madol Archaeological Site of Pohnpei (Federated States of Micronesia)

This brochure produced by Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage (JCIC) in cooperation with the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and UNESCO Apia Office illustrates the Nan Madol archaeological site, the Ancient Sea City which is often called the "Venice in the Pacific".



Rio+20 Regional Workshop for Asia and the Pacific: Workshop Report

The joint ICSU and UNESCO Rio+20 regional workshop for Asia and the Pacific on 16-18 April 2011 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, provided a platform to discuss the role of Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development, with particular attention to the development of a green economy. The outcomes of the workshop serve as regional framework for action in view of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20).



Asian-Arab Philosophical Dialogues on Culture of Peace and Human Dignity.

This is the third volume of UNESCO's Asian-Arab Philosophical Dialogues to stimulate philosophical reflection on contemporary themes. This volume aims to strengthen the role of philosophy in public policy, to promote the teaching of non-Western philosophies and to broaden intercultural communication and exchange on the burning issue of human dignity and on achieving a culture of peace.



This newsletter was printed eco-friendly using soy-based ink and 60% recycled paper

The Asia-Pacific region counts for almost two thirds of the world's population, living in 46 UNESCO Member States. UNESCO Bangkok covers the Asia-Pacific region with a network of Field Offices, consisting of a Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok, a Regional Bureau for Science

in Jakarta, seven Cluster Offices (covering a number of countries) in Almaty, Apia, Bangkok, Beijing, Jakarta, New Delhi and Tehran, and seven National Offices, in Dhaka, Hanoi, Islamabad, Kabul, Kathmandu, Phnom Penh and Tashkent. In line with UNESCO's mandate to promote peace

and human development through education, sciences, culture and communication, the UNESCO Offices in the Asia-Pacific region facilitate international co-operation, set common standards and foster the dissemination of quality information.



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