



UNDP Afghanistan Newsletter

1 August 2006

More women teachers - UNDP/ANBP and Ministry of Education initiative

New female teachers are being trained through the UNDP's Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme.

Just one of those is Shekeba Shirzaad, one of sixty eight female trainees, who will complete a five months Teachers Training Certification Programme in mid September 2006.

Shekeba graduated from school last year and successfully passed the selection exam to join the Teacher Training Certification Programme (TTCP), thanks to the reintegration programme of ANBP.

"I just graduated from school when I heard from my uncle, an ex-combatant, about the opportunity for female family members of ex-combatants. I immediately agreed to take the training and become a teacher," Shekeba said.

Shekeba said she found the training programme a good opportunity for women from the ex-combatant communities who want to take a more active role in life by becoming teachers.

"I am getting sufficient training in the pedagogical and methodological aspects of teaching. I learnt here how to approach the class, evaluate the students and make effective planning for teaching purposes. Becoming a teacher will greatly affect my life socially and economically and I will feel more



respectable and independent," she said.

Shekeba, with her twenty fellow classmates, in total sixty two in Kabul, started the teachers training programme in April 2006 under 13 professional instructors.

Training is being held in Mazar for 32 trainees, Herat 70, Kandahar 60, Jalalabad 26, Kunduz 60 and Bamiyan 22. The programme is due to be completed in September this year when the students will have to undertake a final exam to determine whether they can really compete to be independent teachers.

The Teacher Training Certification Programme is directly supported by UNDP/ANBP in close coordination and cooperation with the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs.

In this case 335 women were targeted country wide from the ex-combatant communities for a five months training to be trained to teach primary

classes at a school in their provinces.

This coordination between UNDP/ANBP and the ministries will increase the number of qualified female teachers in Afghanistan. The aim is to support Afghanistan's commitment to reach the Millennium Development Goals of achieving universal primary education and gender equality at all levels by 2015.

In particular the coordination between UNDP/ANBP and the Education Ministry mitigates the shortage of qualified teachers, particularly women, and lack of training, one of the key obstacles that Afghanistan faces.

The Teachers Training Certification Programme is one of the reintegration options given to ex-combatants after the completion of disarmament and demobilization.

The completion of the reintegra-

Inside this issue:

[Drawing and writing competitions for a healthier environment](#)

2

[Afghanistan launch of the UNDP Asia Pacific Human Development Report](#)

3

[Government of Japan contributes to key UNDP trust funds](#)

3

[US\\$ 4 million worth of counter narcotics projects to be started](#)

3

[The Government of Switzerland contributes to the recruitment of 300 extra women into Afghanistan's police](#)

4

[AIMS continues to roll out hi-tech training](#)

4

[UNV Highlighted - Pembre Lero from Democratic Republic of Congo](#)

5

[Weapons collection ceremony held in Takhar province](#)

7

[Media awareness day for Afghan journalists on disability issues](#)

7



Visit:
www.anbpafg.org



Shekeba with her fellow classmates and trainers in Kabul

tion phase of DDR by June 30 2006 has marked the end of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process in Afghanistan. To date, 24,536 women related to the ex-combatant community have received or are scheduled to receive additional education and income generation opportunities in development projects. In another case, ANBP has signed a Letter of Intent with the World Food Programme (WFP) to facilitate the inclusion of 4,455 women from the ex-combatant community in WFP-related projects from 2006 to 2010.

Drawing and writing competitions for a healthier environment

Fifteen thousand school children in the north of Afghanistan, in some thirty schools, are being encouraged to write essays and draw pictures on a healthier environment theme as part of the UNDP's GAIN project, the Green Afghanistan Initiative.

The UNDP project, with a base in Mazar-e-Sharif, is supporting GAIN, in which several UN agencies have agreed in a joint effort to tackle the environmental degradation in Afghanistan.

GAIN aims to raise awareness in communities on environmental issues.

In the schools the awareness raising programme consists of three elements: essay and picture drawing competitions and multiple choice questionnaires.

Children from the ages of 10 to 11 years old are given

assignments and their tasks are then reviewed by a committee of school teachers and UNDP-GAIN staff.

The best forty entries receive a prize and during the distribution of prizes, all school children are lined up in a gathering and told about the objectives of GAIN, including such issues as the advantages of sapling plantation and environmental protection.

School children aged six to nine years old have the chance to tackle verbal and written multiple choice questionnaires.

The UNDP's GAIN team in Mazar plan for the awareness programmes to be conducted in 30 schools in urban and rural areas.

Through the programmes the school children find out about the impacts and positive effects of greening within a community, such as the filtering of air, the prevention of flooding, changing weather patterns and soil erosion.



GAIN team member performing an activity together with school children

GAIN is a joint programme, which has been jointly initiated by UNICEF, UNAMA, UNEP, WFP and UNDP, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry/Food and the National Environment Project Agency (NEPA) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The objectives of GAIN are reforestation, environmental protection and the development of a green environment in the country. UNDP, as one of the stakeholders of GAIN activities, set up a management team and a regional office in Balkh province in Mazar-e-Sharif on February 15 2006 and officially commenced its activities, covering the nine provinces of the north and north eastern regions (eg: Balkh, Jawzjan, Sari Pul, Faryab, Samangan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan).

The UNDP/GAIN office in Mazar is taking the initiative by conducting environment awareness campaigns, training workshops and environmental capacity building in the provinces.

Afghanistan launch for the Asia Pacific Human Development Report

The UNDP's major Asia Pacific Human Development Report was launched in Kabul on July 17 2006 in the presence of some eighty invited guests including senior Afghan Foreign and Commerce Ministry officials and international community figures.

The report entitled "Trade on Human Terms: Transforming Trade for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific" examines recent developments on trade and economic growth and assesses the impact on human development – more specifically, the effects on the region's poorest countries and on its poorest people.

The report further emphasizes that neither trade nor growth can ever be ends in themselves;

but means towards the larger goals of expanded human development and combating poverty and deprivation. The report offers an eight-point agenda to help countries rise to the challenge of a demanding new environment for international trade.

Acting UNDP Country Director Anita Nirody said: "It is imperative that Afghanistan focuses on investing in improving its competitiveness – infrastructure, products and skills – to effectively operate in the region. As a Landlocked Least Developed Country, Afghanistan is in a vulnerable position – with regard to market access for its products. Adoption of strategic trade policies – bilateral, regional and multilateral – is critical to integrating Afghanistan

in the international economy. An overwhelming percentage of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods. The agricultural sector is the largest employer in the country. Incomes however have not risen at the farm gate level. A focus on improving the agriculture – particularly value-added production and downstream processing – sector's profile is key to improving quality of life among the population."

Building on the success of Afghanistan's first National Human Development Report for 2004, UNDP and Kabul University have embarked on establishing the Centre for Policy and Human Development at Kabul University.



Mahmood Saiqal, Deputy Foreign Minister addressing the launch



Zia-u-Din Zia, Deputy Ministry of Commerce during a speech at the APHDR launch

Government of Japan contributes to key UNDP trust funds

The Government of Japan has donated a further US\$ 7.9 million to two key UNDP trust funds in Afghanistan.

US\$ 5 million goes to the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund which supports counter narcotics related projects and activities outlined in the National Drug

Control Strategy. The CNTF is administered by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics. This donation is earmarked to alternative livelihoods.

US\$ 2.9 million has come from the Japan funded Counterpart Fund which is administered by Afghanistan's Ministry of Fi-

nance, as a contribution to the Law and Order Trust Fund of Afghanistan (LOTFA). LOTFA was established in 2002 by UNDP to enable police to return operation. The fund's activities include ensuring that police salaries are paid and the boosting of recruitment and training.

These recent contributions from

Japan were confirmed at the Second Tokyo Conference on the Consolidation of Peace in Afghanistan, held in Tokyo on July 5 2006.

These donations will contribute to the reinforcement of security sector reform in Afghanistan.

US\$ 4 million worth of counter narcotics projects to be started



Four counter narcotics projects worth a total of US\$ 4 million will be launched through the UNDP established Counter Narcotics Trust Fund.

Letters of agreements have been signed by the Ministers of Counter Narcotics, Energy and Water Resources and the Deputy

Ministers of Agriculture, Finance and Public Health.

1 – Three one year micro hydro projects to be built over the next year will provide electricity facilities to Badakhshan's Chatta, Jurm and Sangab districts. Total: US\$ 2,545,700 to be implemented by the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources.

2 – Pilot mushroom projects to be started on a small scale in Kabul, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat, Takhar, Kunduz Ghazni and Bamiyan. Total: US\$ 130, 825 to be implemented by the Ministry

of Agriculture and Irrigation over six months.

3 - Community based drug treatment programmes for addicts in eight provinces (Ghor, Ghazni, Bamiyan, Nimroz, Farah, Faryab, Kunduz and Jawzjan). Total: US\$ 935,361 to be implemented by the Ministry of Public Health over three years.

4 - Two residential drug treatment programmes for addicts in Nangarhar and Balkh. Total: US\$ 354,207 to be implemented by the Ministry of Public Health. "The Ministry of Counter Narcotics, as the leading body on

counter narcotics, has always been trying to help farmers and the development projects undertaken by the line ministries. Today, approval of these projects are a clear testimony to this fact. We ask the International Community to channel their further financial assistances to CNTF and propose the line ministries to come up with more effective projects to be funded through CNTF which will help farmers avoid growing poppy," H.E Habibullah Qaderi, Minister of Counter Narcotics said.

Established officially on October

29 2005 by UNDP, the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF), aims to support the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to fight poppy production and the drug trade. The CNTF is designed in a way that the Government of Afghanistan retains the overall responsibility for the programme, with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) as the executing entity and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) as the programme directorate and also as one of the implementing entities. The line ministries are other implementing partners for projects funded through the CNTF. The fund supports counter nar-

cotics related projects and activities outlined in the eight pillars of the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS), which include: Alternative Livelihoods, Building Institutions, an Information Campaign, Drug Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Eradication, Drug Demand Reduction and Treatment of Drug Addicts, and Regional and International Cooperation.

Visit:

www.mcn.gov.af

The Government of Switzerland contributes to the recruitment of 300 extra women into Afghanistan's police

Three hundred extra women will be recruited into Afghanistan's police force thanks to a contribution from the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to the UNDP administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA).

The agreement on a US\$1.03 million donation, signed between SDC and UNDP on July 12 2006, will ensure the extra recruitment of police women across the country in areas such

as Kabul, Mazar, Kunduz, Jalalabad, Herat and Kandahar.

At the same time the funds will be used to recruit, train and establish gender units in police headquarters and stations and to train and sensitise police officers on gender issues such as violence against women and to support an existing 160 women police officers.

The US\$ 980,000 to be spent over a two year period will increase the enrolment of women into the police. A further US\$

50,000 will go towards the Electronic Payroll System, a major part of LOTFA, which ensures the timely payment of salaries through a nationwide computerised system.

UNDP has played an important role in enabling the Ministry of the Interior to begin the process of rebuilding the civilian police. In May 2002 UNDP established a Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) to enable police to return to operation throughout the country, with the following priorities:

- Nationwide payment of police staff salaries
- Acquisition of non-lethal equipment
- Rehabilitation of department facilities
- Recruitment and training
- Institutional development.

AIMS continues to roll out hi-tech training

Two hundred and ninety members of Afghanistan's Central Statistics Office have so far taken part in training from UNDP's Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS).

Since 2002 AIMS has been training staff in seven ministries and giving technical support such as providing GIS Lab, the

Geographical Information System Laboratory, which designs maps and helps ministries in planning and accessing data on different regions of the country.

At the Central Statistics Office 78 staff have received basic English courses, 112 have been trained in basic computer usage, 48 have been trained as AIMS Certified Database Assistants and 56 as AIMS Certified GIS Assistants.

Noorullah, the Head of the Pub-

licity Unit of CSO, who himself is a trainee of basic computer programmes said: "In the past staff of our office were not able to use computers, but the capacity of our staff is upgrading, with the support of organizations and offices such as the AIMS project of UNDP. "

"In the past every bit of our work in designing of maps, we had to do by pen and paper and if the maps that we had designed or working on for so long was damaged in the process of designing or transfer to some where, we

must have started the job from zero, now we can transfer it with a memory stake, with CD disk or to have at several place where it is needed, or to print as many as we want," said Tamim, the Head of the GIS Unit at Afghanistan's CSO.

Tamim added: "Right now we are working to design and digitalize maps of 34 provinces, 364 districts and nearly 40,000 villages of Afghanistan and soon we will add the population of each district of the country to the map."



UN

Volunteers

UNV Highlighted – Pembe Lero from Democratic Republic of Congo

How did you hear about UNV and how did you apply? How did you decide to volunteer in a post war state such as Afghanistan?

- My first supervisor was a volunteer, this is where I heard for the first time about volunteers.
- Many other colleagues working with us in the DRC operation were also volunteers, not just with WFP, but other UN agencies such as UNHCR.
- After few years many Congolese colleagues started also going out as volunteers, mainly in Sudan/Chad, Ivory Coast, etc.
- Since I had enough experience and I felt I had developed enough skills in the areas of emergency food security assessments, and project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, I applied for the first time for a UN Volunteer position through the Tsunami roster. My CV was retained on the roster, but they kept sending me messages saying that they could not find a position. Then finally they informed me that my CV was now posted in the main UNV database. This is how I started receiving job offers as UNV, first in Ivory Coast, then Liberia and finally Afghanistan. I turned down the two first offers because of personal reasons. I was in middle of personal projects, I was not available for the positions offered.
- Why a post war country like Afghanistan? Well besides all the stories about suicide bombs, etc, which makes Afghanistan a little different from DRC, the situation of populations in general is very similar for both countries. In terms of programme, it is also pretty similar. Both countries are post-conflict countries with food security and vulnerability problems, population displacement and reintegration problems, children education problems, basic infrastructures problems, etc. so that the type of programmes to be designed and implemented in order to address those problems are also similar for both countries.



***Pembe Lero, 43,
Congolese (DR-Congo),
Programme Officer for
Food for Education Unit in
World Food Programme,
Afghanistan.***



Do you have any previous volunteer experience?

Yes, I have worked as a volunteer at the Baha'i World Center in Israel for 18 months (1991-1992).

How do you find Afghanistan as a duty station?

It is a nice place. Different from other places I have been. It is too bad that I can not bring my family here or participate in the social life of people here because of security reasons.



What are your difficulties and challenges that you face in your work in Afghanistan?

Physical security constraints remain the major challenge.

What are the positive and negative points about Afghanistan?

Well, as I already said, the country is beautiful with lots of interesting history and culture, particularly in the areas of tapestry and handcrafts. Everywhere you go people are well-coming (they always invite you for a cup of tea, which you don't always have in many parts of the world where I have been). The negative point is of course the permanent conflicts in which innocent people like children and women pay their precious lives and which somehow will prevent for a long time the country to develop.

Is Afghanistan a better place for UN volunteers? Comments?

I think service from dedicated people is needed in countries like Afghanistan where million of people do actually need their help. Therefore a better place for volunteer is actually where they need their services. Think for example about thousands and thousands of children and particularly girls who are now able to go to school somehow because of the remarkable job achieved by volunteers in such agencies as WFP or UNICEF. It is true that security constraints make it too difficult to carry out the job, but you always look at the end in the beginning and at the end of the day when you look at a school built and kids going to that school, it makes you happy because it is a reward of your sacrifices as well.

How would you evaluate how volunteerism benefits you?

Volunteerism brings benefit to me in different ways such as the joy and happiness of helping others, personal skills development and experience acquisition, being a part of something that has been successfully achieved 1st. elections in Afghanistan after many years of dictatorship and chaos, is something that was done once, and being a part of that is something we always want to be proud of, etc.

What message would you like to convey for interested candidates to join a volunteer organization?

It is true that we are now living in a world of materialism, where everybody is running after money and much energy is spent to accumulate as much money as we can, as many material things as we can. And at this particular time in the history of mankind when the world is plunged in the darkness of conflicts and wars in every continent, leaving millions and millions of destitute and desperate people, I believe that good deeds and service of dedicated souls, who would not look at their personal interests first, but at bringing hope, joys and happiness to the desperate people; can make a difference. This is what a volunteer organization is about and being a part of that body of people is something to be proud of.

Any other comments?

After these first 4 months of service in Afghanistan, I am happy for having taken this decision, which was not easy for me and my family to take Insh'Allah, I hope Afghanistan is not the last place, I will continue to offer my services wherever they are needed on this earth.



www.unvafghanistan.org

Weapons collection ceremony held in Takhar province

Takhar province in the north of Afghanistan is heading towards being the first province in the country to conform to the requirements of the DIAG process (Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups).

On July 26 2006, a ceremony took place in Chah Ab district to support Commander Bashir Qanet's contribution to DIAG. During the ceremony, Commander Saddrudin, who acted on behalf of Commander Qanet, handed over more than 100 weapons to the DIAG weapons collection teams.

By negotiating and accepting to partly surrender his weapons, Commander Bashir Qanet is

supporting DIAG, a government-led programme intending to eradicate the influence of illegal armed groups in the country, thus allowing the consolidation of peace, rule of law and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Takhar has been selected with five other provinces for the Main Phase of DIAG. On June 1 2006, 36 notification letters were handed over to Takhar commanders and government officials linked with illegal armed groups to request them to hand over their weapons and disband, or sever their links with groups.

Since then, due to the ongoing efforts of the governor and the authorities, a number of

commanders have demonstrated partial or full compliance with the process, paving the way for Takhar to be the first province of Afghanistan in conformity with the requirements of DIAG. The establishment of a safe and secure environment in compliant districts will allow communities to become attractive for potential development and governance projects and certainly lead to renewed prosperity in Takhar.

The ceremony was attended by the deputy governor of Takhar as well as representatives from Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) and UNAMA.



The DIAG process was launched on June 11 2005. So far, 24,182 weapons including 14,920 operational weapons, as well as 20,935 pieces of boxed and 196,840 pieces of unboxed ammunition have been handed over to and verified by ANBP collection teams in Afghanistan.

Media awareness day for Afghan journalists on disability issues

An awareness day by the UNDP's National Programme for Action on Disability (NPAD) was held on July 12 to brief journalists on the current situation of people with disabilities in Afghanistan.

The primary objective of NPAD is to raise awareness and capacity and to develop government structures for policy development and the implemen-



Right: Gul Makai Siawash, the Director of The Kabul Orthopaedic Organization, briefing journalists on the ongoing activities of the organization

tation and coordination of disability-focused efforts in Afghanistan.

Najibullah Fahim, the Deputy Minister of Martyrs, Disabled and Social Affairs, in his opening remarks said: "Disability is not a new phenomenon that we can overcome in the short term. As long as land-mines and poverty still exist in this country, disability can not be reduced."

Afghanistan is one the most mined countries in the world and on average five people become disabled every day. In most cases, a disability of some sort is becoming the main reason why disabled people lose out on job opportunities. The number of people who became disabled as a result of war makes up half of Afghanistan's disabled community.

Mohammad Reza, who's 40 years old and a father of six daughters and two sons, lost both of his arms in an electrical

shock accident 20 years ago. Reza says he is the only person able to support his family, but he constantly faces problems when looking for work: "For one week I kept going to a shop to try and get the job as I was promised by the manager of the shop."

Based on the recruitment regulations of the Afghan government, all ministries are obliged to recruit 5% of their employees from people with disabilities, but there is no record if the regulation is implemented or not.

Ali Dost, who's 35 years old and a father of six children, works in a rug loom workshop: "I lost my left leg because of shrapnel from a mortar fired by the Taliban nine years ago when they were fighting to take control of Kabul. I am paid 500Afs (US\$ 10) per month for my work in this workshop."

In the course of the awareness

day journalists were taken to visit two disabled centres including the Kabul Orthopaedic Organization, an Afghan NGO funded by USAID, which is



Ali Dost, weaving a rug in a local workshop for the disabled

providing physiotherapy and artificial limbs and walking aids to people with disabilities. A second project visited was a workshop which produces rugs, metallic windows, doors, fuel containers and some other metallic essentials.



UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

United Nations Development Programme, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul, Afghanistan

tel: +93 (0) 20 212 4000 or +93 (0) 20 212 4076

For more information on any of these stories, or to make contributions, please contact:

Dominic Medley, Media Relations Officer; tel: +93 (0) 70 691 985; email: dominic.medley@undp.org

Aziz-u-Rahman Gulbahari, National Public Information Officer; tel: +93 (0)799 370 567; email: aziz.gulbahari@undp.org

www.undp.org.af

An Image of Afghanistan

Photo: Ayna Khaidova

