Star Institute of World Languages

Star is on the cusp of launching the Star Institute of World Languages, an institute of foreign languages and a professional translation center. The establishment of this new institute will develop a broader base of global language proficiency among interested students and the necessary training for students to provide quality translation services inside and outside the country.

Star Institute of World Languages will be serving its students in six different language departments – English, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, French, and German. While building language proficiency in these additional languages, Star will simultaneously be expanding the pool of translators qualified to provide translation services from various languages to Dari and vice versa. These translations have historically been done in Iran and are basically affected by Iranian social and educational requirements. This has made Afghanistan a consumer country which does not produce its own textbooks at BA or MA level and is heavily dependent on the translations of Iranian Persian and the relevant standards coming from that country. When I was a BA student, I could rarely find a sociology book addressing the social problems of Afghanistan that was translated by or written by an Afghan scholar. Afghanistan needs more native translators and translations so that books, articles and other texts can be more conducive to the context of Afghan academia and scholarly demands.

As a result of Afghanistan’s dependency on Iran for translations, many professional texts, scholarly journals and textbooks do not get translated accordingly. We are victims of the religious, political and cultural sensitivities of the Islamic Republic of Iran which result in serious censorship of translated texts. These texts are essential for the rapidly developing educational environment in Afghanistan and it is critical that we harness the freedom of speech that is enjoyed in Afghanistan to maintain and strengthen our independence.

As more foreign language expertise is developed and translation skills are perfected, native translation services will ensure that the quality of academic research will be holistic and comprehensive. The longer range plans for the Star Institute of World Languages includes training in and facilitation of academic research and a diverse offering of courses within the social science discipline. With those objectives, our academic research courses and academic language training will prove crucial. Translations will bridge the gap in literature, history, science, law, sociology, anthropology and many more areas where Star can tap into the abundance of educational approaches and resources in other countries.

The Star Institute of World Languages will help to fill the vacuum in Afghanistan’s educational systems and will serve the multitude of students who want to study abroad. Higher language proficiency in English, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, French, and German will make Star’s students more competitive and will help to open doors for admissions and scholarships in those countries. The Star institute will aim to provide the best techniques and strategies for student success. Courses such as Academic Writing, Creative Writing, Critical Reading and Thinking and university success programs will all be designed to ensure that Star alumni are prepared for the challenges of an academic life in diverse disciplines. Training programs such as TOEFL, SAT, GMAT and GRE are some of the many programs that will give Star students an edge over the competition. The institute will be a complete two-year degree program equivalent to a U.S. community college level or similar to 14th grade.

Our operation in four branches in Kabul and three new branches in Bamyan, Daikondi and Mazar-e-Sharif has given us the opportunity to be connected with some of the smartest and most talented students in these four provinces. As our students grow, so must we. So come grow with us. We have heard your pleas to offer more language training and higher level courses and that is the path we must follow. Join us for a difference and benefit from our 17 years as a pillar of educational institutions in Afghanistan.

A message from Ali Reza Yasa, Chairman and Founder

Star Reading Club

Star Reading Club is a group of committed individuals who master their critical reading and thinking by circulating a book for reading and meeting at the end of the week for two hours to discuss the book and express their opinions, likes, and dislikes. Please join our club to stimulate your interest in reading. The Book Club will provide you with a list of books and creates a social atmosphere to help you enhance your reading and thinking strategies.
Second part of:

The itinerant life of a young Afghan: an auto-biography

A concise story of upheavals since 1992

autobiography of Timor entitled "I am Timor, the conqueror of the globe". In that book I read about his bravery and persistent diligence and commitment. The fact that he had written his biography by his left hand despite of being right handed made him even more glorified in my eyes. He had the ability to fight with both hands equally and spontaneously; he'd swing the sword through the veins by one hand and throw spear towards a predator by another, leaving his enemies beheaded and pierced through the chest.

The arrows he’d throw flew at the speed of light and thunders. His horse, which recognized its master by the confidence he would reflect while sitting on the saddle, and the edges of his sword; sharp enough to make the enemy shiver and tremble from distance, all sounded magnificent and marvelous at that time and I enjoyed it more than I now enjoy a three dimensional Hollywood movie. So to speak, these two activities (exercising and reading) were mainly what my mind was occupied with.

But what was going on in the country and the world? Who is doing what and why? How many countries are involved in stabilizing Afghanistan and which country is more interested in which part? Why is the United States so eager to take the military leadership? Who funded Taliban and who is supporting it now? Why can’t the Taliban be eradicated? etc...

These questions never crossed my sight and never did I try to seek answers to them. This routine continued for a couple of years till my father was again appointed as a diplomat, but this time it was much more prestigious, for he had become the consulate general of Afghanistan in Mumbai, India.

First time visiting India, the biggest democracy in the world, as it sounds; was an extraordinarily delightful experience. We were welcomed by the hospitality of Indian hostesses, and heat blowing over our face; as if we have entered a wet sauna in summer. I knew that the moisture and humidity will undoubtedly effect my harsh attitude as well as my arid and darkish skin for better, therefore, I tried to learn being flexible and open for changes from the very first days. As a diplomatic family, we were received with utmost hospitality and escorted to the parking lot by the Indian as well as Afghan officials. We didn’t have to carry our luggage neither did we cared about the formal procedures we were supposed to, like that of the ordinary tourists or visitors. Albeit, we were quite familiar with such feelings and formalities since it was not the first experience, which, consequently, helped us not to miss up giving me the confidence to claim that we could be a very ideal family representing our country.

We left IGI airport of Delhi for Mumbai; our destination, on that very day and arrived in the evening, India, being a federal country, has many states which are internally very autonomous with embedded social and linguistic diversities, but they have a very united nationalistic spirit when it comes to foreign policies. Having the most detailed and biggest constitution of the world, India has successfully understated the potential dictators of state-level bureaucrats through certain preventive measures included in her constitution.

I had read about India and was expecting a completely new territory, therefore, I was not as astonished as my siblings. Manmohan Singh, the prime minister of India, had triumphed to quite effectively mobilize the natural as well as human resources of the country. Although as a result of partition in 1947, India had received limited rather exhausted economic infrastructures, depreciated natural resources, counterproductive population, sterile land and untrained laboreers, yet her eminent leaders had tackled all these challenges and endeavored to escalate India’s international status in terms of economic growth.

When it comes to politics, India in my opinion, has one of the most stable political systems in the region.

To be continued...
Death in a Fishing Boat – a reflection on the film

Death In A Fishing Boat is a film by Michael Grytz and Klaus Martens that shows the struggles of African migrants who have suffered as a result of European vs. African Interests. When they migrate by boat to Europe, the journey itself takes weeks, with seventy, eighty, sometimes one hundred and fifty people crammed into small pirogues (large wooden canoes). This is my reflection after watching the one hour film for my Globalization, Migration, and Transnationalism course.

The pain of the Senegalese migrants is a common pain reflecting the dark side of modern capitalism. Poor societies are exposed and attracted to the glamorous image of other societies. People take great risks to reach those lands and end up finding nothing on the other side of the shore. The tragedy happening in the fishing industry off the coast of Senegal which further propels the young people to seek a more promising future elsewhere is a vicious cycle which can easily be called burglary. The fish are being stolen from them which equates to stealing the source of their income. Fisherman whose job and source of income has been stolen by the northern European countries reach the shores and natural resources have been stolen from them by the so-called formal bilateral government institutions’ fishing contracts in which these original fishermen have no stakes in the profit. Such a dilemma is best coined by Marx who believes that in a capitalist system the state and factory owners do not provide a salary that the worker really deserves. It creates an alienation, a state of producing more earnings then are needed for the company owner and not providing the workers with the amount of income that is truly worth the amount of energy, time, health and resources invested.

A painful scene in the movie is the scene of Tia Roy’s empty streets. No young men and a newly married woman whose husband drowned during his attempt to migrate. Women weeping among other women. The men and boys in fishing villages like Tia Roy have died, had to turn back to Africa or have ended up in detention centers or refugee camps bruised, beaten and traumatized with the horrible memories of their voyage. These migrants are lost in a state of uncertainty mixed with homesickness and eventually are forced to return back to their country.

It seems ironic that such is the destiny of immigrants at a time when man can walk on the surface of the moon and search for other planets or refugee camps bruised, beaten and traumatized with the horrible memories of their voyage. These migrants are lost in a state of uncertainty mixed with homesickness and eventually are forced to return back to their country.

What else is this if it is not the dark side of capitalism? Modern man and the so-called capitalist systems create violent killers and predators who use their fellow man’s resources under the pretext of competition. Those men, those noble fishermen, personally, emotionally, historically and religiously connect with nature and the magnanimous sea as a source of food and use nature-friendly nets to let the small fish return to the sea and avoid fishing during breeding season. If these honorable, hardworking fishermen become terrorists, join ISIS or hijack planes, can they be blamed? One way or the other the modern world and the so-called advent of civilization and human rights are stealing from these men and their families. Their livelihoods are robbed from them, they get themselves killed seeking alternative ways to support their families, they are suppressed to a point where they have no hope for living and yet they don’t even benefit from the 7% profit of the immoral agreements that allow other nations to steal their resources.

Chinese companies look for shrimp because it’s a profitable commodity. A Chinese bank owner with a chain store partner wishes to get shrimp thousands of kilometers away from their own shores and take them from the people who depend on every penny or every single fish which are collected in abundance, separated from the shrimp, left to die and then discarded back into the water. What else is this if it is not the dark side of capitalism? Modern man and the false promises of equality can best be seen by how migration tends to be both promoted and fought against by the same source. The European Union’s Committee on Fisheries determines so-called “economic partnership treaties” for countries like Mauritania and the Committee for Development Policy tries to determine if the EU fishing policies have prompted the mass exodus of refugees to Europe. The EU simultaneously supports development projects in African countries to support small local fishing operators and sends over huge fishing trawlers that take away fish from the little boats being supported. This certainly seems like the dark side of capitalism to me.
According to the latest decision of the White House, "U.S. troops remain in Afghanistan." The news comes at a time when a heavy war and terror actions are going on in different points the country, the people are disappointed from the government and disillusioned, and it was a good and hopeful news in such a situation. The presence of foreign troops from the very beginning until now is one of the most important and pivotal guarantee for the survival of the regime in the country. True or not, many people in Afghanistan believe that in the absence of NATO troops, the regime will fall and once again ethnic and religious war will overthrow the country.

In recent months, war and insecurity increased unprecedentedly. The most of Northern provinces are in a fragile situation and in recent days, the Taliban closed two important highways. Not only Kabul-Kandahar highway but also Kabul-Balkh main route is also not safe and terrorists from the Taliban group stop and question the passengers. The way from Maidan to Bamyan once again witnessed war and presence of gunmen affiliated with the Taliban. Increasing of wars and public fear from getting the situation worse, is the best and most appropriate explanation for the presence of U.S. troops and the situation makes all political groups or the ordinary citizens to have no option but to accept the presence of America. But not forget that the presence of U.S. troops and fighting against terrorism has had ambiguities and questions also. If all these questions are not analyzed and discussed and have not given accurate answer, the presence of foreign troops will not have great achievements.

One: It is better to think and analyze the gains and losses of the presence of foreign troops in more than one decade from the perspective of national interest. When after more than a decade, the government, cannot manage and defend the country, still we need for direct support of foreign troops in the battle field.

There is no doubt that one of the main reasons for the failure of the war against terrorism, is the inability of the Afghan government. After coming to power of the National Unity Government (NUG) the country in all aspects of the situation is worse and more dangerous. The constitution has been ignored repeatedly. The NUG itself is the outcome of a political agreement not in accordance with the principles and values of the constitution. The House of Representatives is confused about their legitimacy to keep open the door of the House or not but the government still has not taken any very primary moves on holding the election. The situation in the judiciary branch is also very similar to the destiny of the Parliament. Still, the government has failed to appoint all new high-ranking officials. A clear economic policy to decrease unemployment and poverty is not even drafted yet. The major part of the international fund is still spent on imaginary projects which doesn’t exist in real. Financial support of Americans went the same way that years ago had experienced in Vietnam. Americans entered with a huge amount of money in Vietnam but the result was coming to power of a mafia minority that had everything in their control and on the other hand, the living condition of millions of poor people got worse and unbearable day by day. The result was that a minority of corrupt mafia, could not stand against the anger and the will of millions of disillusioned people. In Afghanistan also, Western countries and the United States of America invested too much money, but these big investments, had no result than the rising of economic mafia circles and brought no tangible change to the lives of the Afghan people. After the years, a new wave of emigration and fleeing the country, makes this fact understandable very well.

Two: The leaders of Afghanistan must accept that they cannot and should not always rely on the military, political and economic power of foreign countries. The presence and support of foreign forces in the country, is an opportunity for the country to solve the crises that the Afghan people have suffered them for years. The forces of foreign countries are not supposed to remain here forever and sacrifice themselves to defend Afghanistan. Tomorrow when the fight against terrorism is not a part of America's national interest and the terrorism is not a serious threat to the western countries, how to protect this country and guarantee the regime? The presence of US troops in the country as in previous years is an opportunity, an opportunity for Afghanistan. It is possible when serious political actions be taken against the terrorists and destroy them, and also the government should have the minimum ability to respond to the immediate needs of the people. Otherwise, like previous years, it will result nothing; something other than destruction, corruption and the continuation of the war.

Regardless of failing to establish economic infrastructures and legal institutions, it seems that the US and its Western allies are not serious to fight against terrorism. There are many signs that support this pessimistic view. Since 2002, it has been proven that Pakistan is leading the war in Afghanistan. Thousands of soldiers from Western countries lost their lives by a war which is designed and led beyond the boundaries of Afghanistan, but no serious and effective action has been taken by western countries in this area. Now a new generation of terrorist groups are rising. This new generation is greatly different with the Taliban and Hezbullah's Islamic party. The root of these new groups are tied to America and its regional allies and the ISIS is supported by the countries which has a great political trade on terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. So there is no guarantee that America's military presence means the end of war on terrorism and bringing security in the country. The Taliban know the Americans the reason for their fight. "Jihad against the crusaders" bring them a justifiable religious and ideological reason to continue their fight, in the same time the presence of US forces is justified with threats of the Taliban. When this nonsense cycle will be finished? No one other than the main and real actors of terror game know the answer.

Media officials and organizations supporting media in Afghanistan condemned the Taliban fulmination toward Tolo News and Yak TV, and emphasized that any kind of attack the media and reporters are considered a war crime. These organizations believes that these fulmination are not only toward Yak TV and Tolo News, but includes all media in Afghanistan. In response to Taliban threats, officials of organizations that supports media, held a press conference and condemned these fulmination. In an announcement, these organizations mentioned that, "media, media officials, and organizations supporting media and the reporters do not limit these warnings only toward two certain media, but it's a warning against freedom of expression and against Afghanistan media family that is the biggest achievement of Afghanistan in recent one and half decade.

Arg also condemned this warning by Taliban by sharing an announcement. According to that announcement, media and people who works in media has an important role in flourishing democracy, aware the citizens and strengthening national and public profits. And paving the grounds for maintenance of these duties is the government’s responsibility. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan assures that the government will do anything to protect the organizations and the reporters as citizens of this country.

October 31st, 2015
The reports, reported from Ghazni local officials say that Kabul-Kandhhar highway is closed because of clashes between government security forces and Taliban, since two days. Local official in Ghazni says that clashes continue at the two points of of Ghazni, one in Nany village, Ander district, and the other in Shahbab area in the center of Ghazni province. According to these officials, the Taliban have set checkpoints and bombed some areas of the highway and destroyed some small bridges and has damaged some other parts of the highway.

Mohamad Ali Ahmadi, deputy governor of Ghazni, said that as a result of clashes in the past two days, five civilians, including a woman, were killed and five others were injured. According to Ahmadi, 20 militants were killed and injured in Shahbab and Ander area by attacking of drones on Monday night. And also, forty Taliban were killed as a result of airstrike in Mosor district, he said. According to Ahmadi, a total of 72 Taliban were killed and 41 injured in the past two days. Taliban have said nothing so far in this case.

Earlier, Jame Jamie, Ghazni’s provincial council representative said to Erilawe Ros that Taliban from Wardak, Logar, Oruzgan and Werdaj of Paktia province including many Pakistani and Arab Taliban which their number is around three or hundred people, equipped with tanks acquired from the war in Uroqgan and Paktia provinces.

According to local officials in Ghazni, the Taliban after the fall of Kunduz intended to collapse Ghazni city and a number of districts of Ghazni, but Ghazni security officials reported that national security forces stopped the Taliban attacks. But still, gathering of Taliban in different parts of this province increases the risk of their attack on Ghazni.

To achieve goals, Taliban abuse kids - Ministry of Interior Affairs

The ministry of interior affairs says Taliban tries to achieve their goals by abusing kids. During a press conference in Kabul, Sediq Seddiqi, the ministry of interior affairs spokesman said that in a single case, about forty Afghan kids were fixed to execute suicide attacks that were saved from Taliban. The Human Rights Independent Commission also asked the terrorist sides not to abuse kids in order to achieve their goals.

In addition, some international commissions also stated their soreness about kids fixed to execute suicide attacks. At the point, kids have regularly been abused in suicide attacks, placing mines, and much more terror activates. Moreover, kids’ department of human rights says there are no statistics monitoring how many kids have been abused in terror activities.

Germany, Turkish and Italian forces to maintain in Afghanistan - NATO

NATO announced that Germany, Turkey and Italy will maintain the presence of their military forces in Afghanistan. The NATO commander in Europe, General Philip Beridlaw said he has received confirmations that members of NATO will continue their mission in Afghanistan alongside 10,000 American forces. Germany has 850 in addition to 760 Italian and 500 Turkish military forces in Afghanistan, under NATO commandment.

According to Obama’s new plans, 9800 American forces will maintain in Afghanistan till 2016 and this amount will reduce to 5500 till 2017. According to Obama’s old plans, the American forces exit process would come to an end in 2016, and only a group of them will remain to protect the US Embassy. In the coming December, the Foreign Affairs ministers will announce their final decisions about their military forces presence in Afghanistan.

Turkey will not allow Kurds to 'seize' northern Syria - Erdogan

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticized Kurds armed forces and said Ankara will not allow the establishment of an independent state in northern Syria. Erdogan did not mention the countries that support Syrian Kurds during the conference. He also criticized Russia president for supporting Syria president.

"We will not allow northern Syria to become a victim of their scheming under no circumstances. Because this is considered a threat for us, and as Turkey, it is not possible for us to say 'yes' to this threat."

In a speech in southeast Turkey, Erdogan denounced the merging of the Syrian town of Tel Abyad last week into an autonomous political structure created by the Kurds. Erdogan delivered his speech soon after Tel Abyad, contiguous with Turkey, was seized by Kurds.

Local elections held in Ukraine

On Saturday, Ukraine held elections once again after the kinetic that caused the president of Russia, Vikto Yanukovych overthrow and escape. One hundred thirty five political parties are participating in this election in which 10,000 mayors and 160,000 city and village council members will be selected. Elections was not held in Karima peninsula, Lohansh, Dontsk, Mariopol and Croonorsnik. Karima peninsula was annexed by Russia, Lohansh and Dontsk is captured by Russian Separatists and Mariopol and Croonorsnik is being controlled by government. In Mariopol, the Polling Stations were closed. As mentioned, the reason was objection in ballots printing. The ballots were printed by Reenad Ahmadophs’s organization, a very famous and rich person.

This year, local election is held while Kiev is pursuing decentralization of power policy. It is like a pretest for Petro Pronchenko, the president of Russia that faces difficulties such as chaotic economic situations and the problem of separatist movement in East Ukraine. This election does not seem to affect the Minsk ceasefire agreement, because this agreement is the responsibility of the central government based in Kyiv.
DON’T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH LEADERS!

Deadline 2 November, 2015

About the author: Shokrullah Begaad graduated from Star Education Society in 2014 and currently studies Administration and Management, Faculty of Psychology in Kabul University. In addition, he works as a finance assistant in UNIMARS Business Group and volunteers in the Outgoing Exchange Department at AIESEC in Afghanistan. Star encourages all eligible readers to consider the special opportunity he shares with us in his article below.

Do you want to be a global leader?
Are you a university student?
Is your age between 18 - 28?

If YES, Register right now!!! Application deadline is 2 November, 2015

AIESEC in Afghanistan has started recruiting new members, so go to the following link and let AIESEC empower you with Leadership...


AIESEC is a global, non-political, independent, not-for-profit organization run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education. The members are interested in world issues, leadership and management. AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, creed, and religion, national, ethnic or social origin. Our international platform enables young people to explore and develop their leadership potential for them to have a positive impact in society.

What has AIESEC done for me?

As a current member of AIESEC in Afghanistan I have gained life-changing experiences. I have developed a network, gained hard and soft skills, and experienced leadership opportunities. Since working at AIESEC, I realized that I am not only a student but also a leader, organizer, and role model. It is a place where you can experience the realities of life, supported by a global network of students just like yourself. As well as it is a place where you can fail, and still find comfort in the arms of your peers.

Anyone who has any success in the professional world understands the power of a strong network. Unfortunately, a lot of people fail to take advantage of networking opportunities. Undoubtedly, working in international organizations like AIESEC, your network will expand locally as well as internationally. As a result, I have developed friendships within Afghanistan and around the world since I joined AIESEC.

In addition, hard and soft skills play a very critical role in our lives and in our future success. Soft skills such as, self-management, self-confidence, stress management, communication skills and networking skills are assets that can be developed as a member of AIESEC. AIESEC has given me the opportunity to organize, coordinate and lead conferences, seminars, trainings, and other projects, in order to develop my soft skills. Having positions and responsibilities in AIESEC have provided me with strong practical orientation and aided me in building and improving my skills in communication. I also have felt the improvement of my English Language, business correspondence, presentations, team-building, leadership, time management, group discussions, interviews and interpersonal skills. Moreover, AIESEC helps me in career visioning and planning.

Through AIESEC, I found my place in the world. I now realize that I have a calling beyond being a simple student. I am a youth leader who has the ability to inspire those around me. I am better-equipped to follow my future passions for entrepreneurship, start-ups, sustainability and technology. At AIESEC, you will find your place and you will also find the answers your soul seeks. As you grow up in this world of a billion paths, you will find comfort in the arms of this global network, and in the power of loving what you are doing every day. AIESEC teaches you how to create your own path in life, not shadowed by others, but of your own. In the end, AIESEC will only give you what you contribute towards it. So work hard, dream big, and strive far.
About the author:

Hadi Zaher was the first graduate of Star Educational Society in the year 1999. He is the nephew of the founder of Star in Quetta, Mr. Nabi Atiq. Hadi was both first position holder and also one of the first Star graduates who, together with Mr. Hussain Yousofi, was selected as a language teacher. Hadi Zaher has an MA from the University of Wollongong in Australia and is currently a post-graduate student at the University of New South Wales. He is the president of Zaheristan, a virtual world of professional photography that he describes in these words: “A land of good people, a free people. A land where flowers bloom in streets, rubab music plays in the samovar tea houses, and kites fly in the skies.”

The Mirror Speaks

Robert Louis Stevenson

Where the bells peal far at sea
Cunning fingers fashioned me.
There on palace walls I hung
While that Consuelo sung;
But I heard, though I listened well,
Never a note, never a trill,
Never a beat of the chiming bell.
There I hung and looked, and there
In my grey face, faces fair
Shone from under shining hair.
Well, I saw the poising head,
But the lips moved and nothing said;
And when lights were in the hall,
Silent moved the dancers all.
So awhile I glowed, and then
Fell on dusty days and men;
Long I slumbered packed in straw,
Long I none but dealers saw;
Till before my silent eye
On that sees came passing by.
Now with an outlandish grace,
To the sparkling fire I face
In the blue room at Skerryvore;
Where I wait until the door
Open, and the Prince of Men,
Henry James, shall come again.

The USSR is worse than the US, the US is worse than the USSR, China is worse than both.

They told the people that Ali Madad Khan had strayed from the right path, and was organizing dance and music parties in his castle. They accused him and his allies of being communists, atheists and apostates, and by decree called for their death. They besieged his castle and shot their way in. The thick walls of his castle were said to have tunnels in them, and the Khan had hid in there. The old man was chased in those tunnels, dragged out and killed in front of his young daughter. Following the execution, the mujaheddin molested his daughter, his only child at home at the time.

The Mujaheddin used his execution as a show of power and as a way to terrify their opponents. They did not let his family bury his dead body. When his daughter tried to approach his body, they Mujaheddin soldiers groped her under the pretense that they were searching her for concealed grenades and weapons. The Khan’s body lay in the open for many days. After the body had decomposed, and had been mauled by jackals, the Mujaheddin allowed his brothers to bury his old body.

Those responsible for his murder were the mujaheddin, including the commander who later tried to kill your father accusing him of apostasy and being a Sholayee. They killed everyone who opposed them. They were no better than the people they had fought and deposed. They were worse. They came from different parties. Some were called Nazis, some Nahzati, others were in Hezb Islami, and still others in Shoraya.

*Shorawi = Farsi for the USSR
*Mullah = Islamic clergy
*Mujaheddin = Islamic fighter; Collective noun for Islamist factions fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan
*Tanzeeemi = A member of Tanzeeem – nationalist faction active in the central highlands in the 1970s and 1980s
*Sholayee = A member of Shola-e-Javed – A Maosist party active in Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s
*Nazi/Nahzati/Herb Islam/Shoraya = Islamist Parties active in Afghanistan in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Vol.1, No. 13

November 13, 1850 - December 03, 1894

Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson was born November 13, 1850 in Edinburgh, Scotland, the only son of respectable middle-class parents. Throughout his childhood, he suffered chronic health problems that confined him to bed. The strongest influence during his childhood was that of his nurse, Allison Cunningham, who often read aloud Pilgrim’s Progress and The Old Testament, his most direct literary influences during this time. In 1867, he entered Edinburgh University as a science student, where it was tacitly understood that he would follow his father’s footsteps and become a civil engineer. Robert, however, had much more of a romantic nature at heart and while obstinately working for a science degree, he spent much of his time studying French Literature, Scottish history, and the works of Darwin and Spencer. When he confided to his father that he did not want to become an engineer and instead wished to pursue writing, his father was naturally upset. They settled on a compromise? Robert would study for the Bar and if his literary ambitions failed, he would have a respectable profession to fall back on.
A young scholar’s path to success

An interview with 13-year-old Sahar Reyhani

Can you please introduce yourself? I am Sahar Reyhani, a resident of Kabul. I am 13 years old, and student of eleventh grade in Din-e-Danish Private High School.

It seems you are too young to be in 11th grade of school. Can you explain how? Well, I was 5 and still was not the legal age to go to school, but, my father registered me for school because of my eagerness for studying and school. Also, I haven’t studied the classes third and ninth, and I’ve just passed through them. To say it easier, it was like jumping or something like skipping these classes.

What is your educational position in the class? To be honest, I am an intelligent girl. I have usually been the first position holder since the first grade, but sometimes I have had the second and the third positions as well.

Have you participated in any educational contests? Yes, I have participated in educational contests like, Daneshmand (Harvard Jawan). I plan to study in the US and wants to be an architect engineer in the future.


In your opinion, which qualifications should a person have to get a scholarship? Well, the standards might be different for each individual, but in my point of view; hard work can lead them to success (to get a scholarship).

Do you think hard-work is enough? Not only hard-work, but still it is the most important factor.

What problems prevent Afghan girls from studying? There are many problems preventing Afghan girls from studying, like insecurity, some unfair and absurd traditions, bad economic situation, etc. Many are killed due to bomb explosions every day; many people can’t risk sending their daughters to school because of this male-dominated culture, and so many others can’t afford the education financially.

What rules are important to be successful? “there is a will, there is a way.” There are many factors which are important, such as, hard-work, the decision you make, and most importantly, your goal.

Where have you studied English? I have taken many English courses in different educational centers, but the most effective one was a two-month TOEFL preparation course I had at Star with Mr. Hussain Yousoofi.

How did you find the method of teaching at Star? What were the advantages and disadvantages? Star helps its students to study English with a high quality by using modern and updated methods.

About the interviewee: Raees Ahmadzai is a senior student of French Literature at Kabul University. He joined Star as a student in 2009 and he has been teaching at SES for the past 5 years. He has also been working as a translator. He together with some of his class fellows have translated a novel of Victor Hugo, ‘Le dernier jour d’un condamné’ from French to Dari, published by IFA.

Victor Hugo, ‘Le dernier jour d’un condamné’ from French to Dari, published by IFA.

It seems you are too young to be in 11th grade of school. Can you explain how? Well, I was 5 and still was not the legal age to go to school, but, my father registered me for school because of my eagerness for studying and school. Also, I haven’t studied the classes third and ninth, and I’ve just passed through them. To say it easier, it was like jumping or something like skipping these classes.

What is your educational position in the class? To be honest, I am an intelligent girl. I have usually been the first position holder since the first grade, but sometimes I have had the second and the third positions as well.

Have you participated in any educational contests? Yes, I have participated in educational contests like, Daneshmand e Jawan (The Young One Who Studies) which is conducted once a year among private schools of the sixth and thirteenth districts of Kabul. I got second position in fourth and eighth grades and first position in fifth grade. I have participated in another contest by the name of Kangaroo in which I got the first position, conducted by the country of Iran. The participants in this contest were from all over Afghanistan. Consequently, during a two-week journey to Iran, I attended a ceremony of appreciation held for successful students in this contest.

What activities have you done out of school? I have taken part in many cultural, educational and social programs like, national gatherings, like programs being held in memory of Baba Mazari, and I have had some performances on television as well. I participate in some cultural activities at school and out of school - for example: reading topics and making speeches.

How many books have you read so far, and can you name some of the most important ones? I have read many books, but I don’t know the exact number. There are some special ones like: Big Wishes written by Charles Dickens, some short stories by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the most important one I have ever read is The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho.

Why was The Alchemist very important to you? Because it is full of inspiration! It is the story of a man who not only sets a goal but reaches it. He does everything to reach his treasure, his goal.


In which field would you like to continue your higher education? Because of my plentiful interest in software and technology, I would like to study in an electronic engineering field.

Do you want to study in Afghanistan or abroad? Afghan universities may have my favorite faculty, but higher education in western universities has a lot more advantages than higher education in Afghanistan. Having facilities, possibilities, qualified teachers, and high quality teaching are the advantages in western universities. Unfortunately, they are what we lack in Afghan universities.

Which country for example? The USA - Harvard has always been my dream, not only mine, but I think every student’s dream.

In environment is a good educational place. There are people who have gotten scholarships and some students who have passed TOEFL successfully after finishing their English course in SES, and also some of Star’s teachers succeed to get Fulbright scholarships. Star is really an outstanding language school with up-to-date methods of teaching and so many facilities here.

I know many people who have got high marks in TOEFL after graduating from Star, and also some who have gotten scholarships.

Please name some people who have helped you to be successful! As you know, parents play the main role in a person’s success. My mother and my father were my first encouragers. They saw this ability in me to be a successful person and, honestly, I have to say that without them I couldn’t be the one who I am now. My parents are my supporters, and I am proud of them. I myself am the third person; if hadn’t have the decision, I would not be in the position that I am now. I want to introduce Mr. Hussain as the fourth and the best teacher I have ever had in my life.

Are your parents educated? Yes, they are both educated.

What is one thing you value the most? My parents, I am really grateful to them. They helped me be who I am now.

Who is your role model? Well, I don’t have any role model in my life, but I want to be a useful person in my life, like Mahatma Gandhi.

What is your message for the students at Star? I want them to work hard. We, the young generation, can be the change we want. I want them to have a goal, and fight for it.

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