Sports activities and other competitions provide many positive opportunities for youth. Our society is competitive and we should teach youth to function in competition and how to both win and lose as good sports. Young people should know that winning and losing are both temporary, and that they should never quit. Likewise, they must learn to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.

In our efforts to develop the potential of talented Afghan youth and to help nurture their bodies, minds and spirits, Star Educational Society offers many activities besides English language instruction. Star is not only an English language institution but also a small community of thinkers and activists that employs a multi-dimensional approach to bring changes in other aspects of our people’s lives. In this spirit, Star will be hosting its 4th annual Futsal tournament on January 1st, 2016. In the future, Star intends to launch co-educational chess competitions and volleyball competitions for our female Starians.

Our intention in organizing and hosting an annual Futsal tournament is to trigger enthusiasm to participate in sports for Star Educational Society students. Hence, we now hold Futsal tournaments to enhance active contribution of students and consequently dictate the significance of sport for their health and how sport can prove beneficial in efficient learning. Futsal tournaments and its likes help steer youth and society away from drug addiction and create a sound environment for the growth of an advanced and healthy community.

Similarly, we endeavor to hold a quality tournament and to introduce emerging talents to the Futsal society and Afghan Futsal Federation to play in national teams. For example, Sayed Ali Naser, Mohsen, and Hussain, the players competing in 2nd and 3rd Futsal tournament of Star, are currently national team members and compete to win Afghanistan national and international awards.

What is Futsal?
Futsal is an exciting, fast-paced football game that is widely played across the world. With five players per side, it is normally played on a flat indoor pitch with hockey sized goals and a size 4 ball with a reduced bounce. Games are 20 minutes per half, played to a stopped clock with 50 time-outs permitted.

Review of the first three Star Futsal tournaments
Star Educational Society strives for a sound society and has always encouraged our youth to actively participate in activities which can push us forward. Star believes that taking part in sports can promote good health and steer youth away from the tendency toward narcotics and drug abuse. Sports are a vital ingredient for better physical and mental strength and, therefore, Star has organized several Futsal tournaments in recent years.

In 2013, Star Educational Society held its 1st Futsal tournament which was highly welcomed by schools and other educational centers. Moreover, the auspicious and unique tournament held by Star caused Sport and Olympic Federation Committee officials to attend, encourage and honor our Futsal Tournament.

1st Futsal Tournament: (2013)
In our first tournament, we registered 40 teams from all over Kabul. Ultimately, in the finals, Real Star Futsal Team defeated Tak Star Futsal Team by 3-4 in penalty, winning the cup.
- Best player: Quder, member of National Futsal Team of Afghanistan
- Best Goal Scorer: Mustafa Sakhizada, member of Super Star Futsal Team
- Best Goalkeeper: Rohullah, member of Jawanan Mailan Futsal Team

2nd Futsal Tournament: (2014)
Mujahideen Futsal Team won the tournament after defeating 32 other teams registered in this competitive tournament.
- Best Player: Hussain, member of Afghan National Futsal Team and Real Futsal Team
- Best Goal Scorer: Sayed Ali Nasir, member of Afghanistan National Futsal Team and Mujahideen Futsal Team
- Best Goalkeeper: Abdul Ali from Mujahideen Futsal Team

3rd Futsal Tournament: (2015)
Sarallah Futsal Team won the cup after a close competition with Sedaqat Futsal Team.
- Best Player: Mohsen, member of Afghan National Futsal Team and Sedaqat Futsal Team
- Best Goal Scorer: Ali Naveed, member of Sarallah Futsal Team
- Best Goalkeeper: Sultan, member of Afghanistan National Futsal Team and Sedaqat Futsal Team

The 4th Futsal Tournament of Star is going to start on January 1, 2016 in Mohammad Baser gym, located in Daush-e-Barchi, Tang Trel Bus Stop. Everyone is highly requested to come and participate in this competitive tournament. Join us for a difference!
The Last Thousand unfolds during America’s final year of military occupation in Afghanistan. And even though since the book’s writing America has reversed its position and decided to leave as many as 10,000 troops on the ground, many feel that is a token compromise.

The book is really a story about Marefat School and the struggles and opinions of six members of that school. Marefat’s mission is to educate its community’s youth, both boys and girls, and introduce them to a secular curriculum, civic participation, and the arts. The Marefat community has embraced the U.S. and flourished under its presence; they stand in lose the most when that protection disappears. Through the eyes of these characters, Stern presents a portrait of Afghanistan, American occupation, and the different ways people in the Marefat community have faced the last thirty years and their hopes and willingness to fight for a future of peace and tolerance.

#Enough! The journey that helped change my life

The realization that not everyone has the privilege to choose where they are born and what they choose to do with their life makes me feel compelled to use my time and efforts in ways that support positive change in the world and bring some happiness in the people’s lives. As a result, I started a new life and began to work with the Afghan Peace Volunteers to help the most vulnerable families and street kids in Afghanistan. We created the Borderfree Community Center of Nonviolence, a place for 100 street kids to study and join us in our long term, people-to-people movement to abolish war.

With over three decades of war, almost every Afghan family has lost their loved ones to war. For many decades, the people of Afghanistan, just like the millions of people in Middle Eastern countries, have experienced the terror of war. Consider Afghanistan’s recent war time everywhere, I understand that poverty, corruption and war are the only things we live every day and every second. We have tried to bring peace by waging war for more than 40 years. War has not worked. So the Afghan Peace Volunteers have formed a community at the Borderfree Community Center of Nonviolence in which weapons and war are banned! We reject hatred, revenge and killing because we believe that nonviolence can change Afghanistan and the world.

Recently, on 21 of September 2015, the International Day of Peace, the Afghan Peace Volunteers launched a campaign called: #Enough! – a long-term people movement to abolish war. We, the people of the human family, agree to abolish war. We renounce all violence and wars and agree never to resort to war under any circumstances.

We are tired of war costing us everything and nothing. We abolish war by forming small, local peace communities of two or more persons in which we agree to ban all kinds of weapons and war. We connect with all borders to build a critical mass of egalitarian relationships and autonomous, nonviolent alternatives for every aspect of life that only opting out of war, but also opting out of the violence of global racism, gender inequalities which the same elite impose on us by force. We heal, live differently and working together for a green and equal world without war.

#Enough! We want to abolish war. We invite you to sign “The People’s Agreement to Abolish War” at http://enough.org/movement#enough, or visit us on Facebook.

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I can still clearly remember the first day when my brother took me for my first driving experience. He wanted to teach me how to drive a car. We had a really long way to go on the roads. It was a sunny afternoon in late summer in my homeland, a hilly and mountainous area. Driving there is really a challenge because of its narrow and twisty roads. It was the first time that I grabbed the steering wheel as a driver.

My body was trembling and a sense, deep in my heart, was telling me, “Go ahead man, you can do it.” My brother switched off the car, took the key out of ignition and gave it to me. He said, “You have to start from the very beginning. Go ahead and start it. Let me see how you can switch it on.” I slowly took the key and inserted it in the ignition. I turned the car on and pressed the accelerator several times for a test.

Since we were in a quiet area out of the city, I did not have any tension regarding busy streets. My only concern was the twisty and bumpy roads. But I had no choice. I had to start. The car had a manual transmission, so driving was more difficult. So, I put the car into gear, slowly released the clutch and started driving. Oh, it is nice being a driver! But regulating the accelerator was a challenge. I could not adjust the accelerator properly and this made my brother mad. He was talking and sometimes even shouting for me to be careful. “Take this hand, go ahead, be careful, what you are doing,” he was screaming. Since he was my elder brother, you know, because of respect, I could not tell him to shut up and let me drive. I continued driving anyhow.

Teaching becomes addicting

I am a calm, quiet and non-talkative person. I rarely involve myself in people’s discussions or casual talks. Normally, I prefer to stay quiet or to only speak when I am asked to. Most of the time, in response to somebody’s words, I reply with just a smile. Usually, this is not a conscious choice, it is just my nature.

Since becoming a teacher, I have discovered that I am a totally different person in my classes. I become very talkative, friendly, sociable, delightful and an active participant in my environment. I communicate with members of the class, I ask other teachers for suggested teaching skills, and I engage freely in discussions. Sometimes I create a subject for discussion. I am much happier in my class and finally my class is where I feel I really exist.

At first, I was not very interested in teaching. In 2010 when I started teaching, I was not prepared. But since I had an A grade in my certificate and I had good English skills, I decided to join that center as a teacher. At the time, I was in the tenth grade of high school. That experience was not a very successful one. On one hand, I was very young and inexperienced and, on the other hand, the experience was in a center where I taught half a specific program for teachers. After five months I felt that center and did not continue teaching English for a long while.

Then in 2014, I started to teach English Speaking Skills to an acquaintance and one more student. When I started teaching privately, I understood that I am a good teacher and able to be an effective person. I was respected as a teacher and that encouraged me to continue teaching. I taught speaking skills in other centers for a while. A few months ago, I applied for teaching at Star Educational Society, and after passing the Teacher Training Course, I was accepted as a teacher at Star.

Teaching has been the best experience of my life. I started by teaching primary classes and in the previous year I had a Prep One class. In addition, I had a special conversation class as well. I realized that I became an instructor of English language. By teaching English to young students, I hope to pave the path towards a better education for them. I do what is the best for my students to help them learn English and I usually give them the various skills. English is not just language of communication, but it is a necessary skill for a better education and a brighter future.

Actually, when I was younger, I didn’t think it would be I will find it,” said the boy. In the time that the king and the little boy were talking, the king’s bodyguard was watching and listening. He was also impressed. He came closer to the boy, took the little boy’s money out of his pocket and said to the king, “My lord! On the way, my things had fallen down together. When I got off my horse to pick them up I found this money too.” The boy confirmed that it was his money and the bodyguard returned it to him. The king was so impressed. He touched the boy’s shoulder and said, “I insist that you take and accept my money as a gift for your honesty.”

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For Young Afghan Women, Scaling Mountain Peaks Brings Highs And Lows

Written by: Sarenya Nelson

The moment on top of an Afghan mountain peak was one of bittersweet triumph for 20-year-old Shoparai Otmonkhel and her friend Zahra Kamri Nooristani, 18. The budding mountain-climbers from Kabul beamed with pride as Nooristani — a shy athlete who earlier this year would blush and mumble when asked a question — spoke eloquently about how she’d discovered women can learn to do or be anything, whether it’s mountain climbing or becoming a physician or teacher.

The sheer joy they felt during the difficult climb was a first, Otmonkhel said. She realized during the expedition that Afghan women have limitless potential — but too few opportunities.

The pair were part of a 16-day expedition in August with 11 other young Afghan women, trained by a nonprofit called Ascend, based in Norfolk, Va.

Nooristani and Otmonkhel scaled two peaks, including a 16,500-ft. mountain — taller than any in the continental United States. They were among seven Afghan team members who made it to the top of that peak.

They named it “The Lion Daughters of Mir Samir” — a nod to the mountain’s scenic province of which translates to “five lions” — as well as the legendary, cliff-faced mountain in the distance that had daunted even veteran climbers and was the subject of a classic 1958 memoir, A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush, by British author Eric Newby.

The young Afghan women’s jubilation was tempered by the fact that neither peak they scaled is the highest in Afghanistan. That one, which they’d originally planned to climb, is 24,580-ft. Mt. Noshaq, in the far northeast along the border with Pakistan. But the plan to ascend Mt. Noshaq was scuttled by al-Qaida operatives two days before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

LeGree says. She plans next year to scale the peak that eluded the team this year. But many moments were rewarding.

Drinkwater says they’d never seen so many injuries on expeditions they’d led before. Both believe the high injury rate had to do with the girls not understanding the consequences of moving carelessly or too fast.

Many also had never spent a night away from home. Plus they had no training or experience in snow or altitude.

But the highlight of the expedition came when they reached the summit, a moment captured by an HBO/VICE film crew.

The young women, who often clashed with each other and their trainers during their year of training, also learned to be there for one another. Nooristani carried her year-younger sister, Rahia, after she injured her knee during the expedition. When teammate Diba Azizi, 17, lost her balance and took a nasty fall off a boulder on the way down from base camp, a male coach scooped her up and rushed her to a clearing. Diba’s teammates gathered around and urged her to be strong as Drinkwater wiped blood off the teen’s forehead.

“It’s okay,” Drinkwater encouraged her. “Breathe, keep breathing, keep breathing.”

Azizi suffered the expedition’s worst injuries and had to be carried off the mountain on horseback. She received stitches on her forehead and a bandage for a sprained ankle at a Panjshir hospital.

For many of the young women, the difficulties of the expedition were mitigated by the beauty of the Panjshir Valley, where they’d never been before. It was the home of Northern Alliance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was the target of a U.S. special forces attack two days before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

But they were eager to reunite with their families, even as many worried about returning to Kabul. An hour before they arrived in the capital, a suicide bomber struck the capital, dampening their excitement about going home.

A few of the climbers worried that their communities would not accept them back because they’d spent nights on the mountains without mahrams or male guardians from their families.

Others — including Diba Azizi, who became engaged — dropped off the team.

Since the expedition, some team members have visited schools in the Panjshir Valley and Kabul to lecture about their experiences. Their presentations have sparked so much interest that scores of Afghan schoolgirls have asked to join the Ascend program. But LeGree says she only has funds and staff to handle 20, who she’s since signed up.

The new girls are now training with 10 of the original expedition members, LeGree says. She plans next year to select the best few to scale Mt. Noshaq, the peak that eluded the team this year.

“It’s out there and the mountain needs to be climbed,” LeGree says. “And everybody wants to go do it.”

Women vote for first time in Saudi Arabia

On Saturday, 21 Qawos, for the first time, women participated in Saudi Arabia’s election process. This election was held for city councils where seats in 284 municipal councils will be elected. The first city council election was held in 2001 where men were the only participants in the election.

According to Zamana Radio, there are 7,000 candidates in this election whereas 908 of the candidates are women. City and Village Councils are the only members in Saudi Arabia who are elected however they have limited authority. Men and women voted separately and Saudi Arabian officials have announced that nearly 1.5 million people registered to cast their votes in this election of which 120,000 are women.

In September 2011, Malik Abdullah son of Abdul Aziz, former king of Saudi Arabia, announced that women in this country will have the right to participate in elections and cast their votes.

This decision has been implemented after four years. There have not been any concerns about this decision in the last four years.

Saudi Arabia has a population of 31 million and it is a country where women do not have the privilege of full rights. Driving, traveling and working without permission of their father or husband are among the rights they are deprived of.

The government system of Saudi Arabia is an Absolute Islamic Monarchy but when Salman came into kingship (sultanate), women gained some privileges of their rights in the social sphere.

But many moments were rewarding. Drinkwater says they were a highlight.

They climbed smoothly and carefully, they did great,” Drinkwater says. “They climbed smoothly and carefully, and when they arrived at the next big ledge system, we switched into a different style of climbing where I had them climb on loose rock, with much of the communication via hand gestures because of the language barrier.

“They did great,” Drinkwater says. “They climbed smoothly and carefully, and when they arrived at the next big ledge system, we switched into a different style of climbing where I had them climb both at the end of a rope — so, six feet apart from each other, climbing on one rope. And this was all completely new and unfamiliar to them, so it was a bit of learning curve that they picked up really quickly.”

The Ascend team included accomplished athletes. Half of them are also on Afghanistan’s national women’s taekwondo team and relied on a martial arts training regimen to keep fit during the expedition.

Using donated and purchased crampons brought from the U.S., the girls crossed glaciers and learned how to climb in snow.

But Azziz suffered the expedition’s worst
Unaccompanied Minors Struggle to Navigate a Chaotic Asylum System

Written by: Younous Muhammadi, president of the Greek Forum of Refugees. Republished from: Open Society Afghanistan
https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/unaccompanied-minors-struggle-navigate-chaotic-asylum-system

Being a refugee is not a choice but a last-ditch bid for survival. The journey is fraught with danger, and gaining a foothold in a foreign culture is a difficult task. Unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable, which is why, on paper at least, there are safeguards to protect them. For instance, authorities must prioritize their identification and registration, and refer them to special hosting facilities. However, the reality is often more challenging. Specifically, unaccompanied minors arriving in Greece are often neither identified nor recorded correctly by the authorities, leaving them to fend for themselves in unfamiliar environs.

Greece’s track record on receiving unaccompanied minors was already abysmal back in 2012 with only about 10 percent processed as they should be. As a result, many minors have spent the last couple of years, these numbers have gotten even worse. Amid the chaos of the reception centers, we’ve seen unaccompanied minors registered as members of families with whom they have no connection, or even adults when they have no proof of identity or birthdate. For instance in Athens a year ago, a team from the Greek Forum of Refugees met a 14-year-old Syrian who was staying in a flat with a group of family friends. Alone and lost, he told us he wanted to reunite with his brother in Sweden. In the absence of official mechanisms, we connected the boy to legal aid and social services for children, where he received help dealing with the stress and trauma of the perilous journey.

We stumbled across this lost teenager purely by chance. So many other minors, victims of an incompetent system, are still out there and don’t know where to seek help. Even minors who are registered properly often have to wait for months or even years before they reunite with their families or are granted appropriate guardianship. During this time they reside in inadequate facilities with insufficient resources that cannot meet their needs in terms of shelter, education, or health services.

This extended wait time is even more problematic for minors who are almost 18 when they arrive. There is no provision to continue care for them once they turn 18, at which time they age out of the system, forced them to become unique and, and hence unprotected. Left to fend for themselves without any financial means or support, they run the risk of becoming impoverished or pushed into forced labor.

In this humanitarian crisis, special attention should be paid to underage children to guarantee their rights and safety. If their parents are not there to assure them a proper childhood, then the state should give them the opportunity to build themselves a decent future. All refugees deserve the opportunity to thrive, particularly the youngest among them.

The Greek Forum of Refugees is a grantee of the Open Society Foundations.

The life situation of girls’ dormitory in Kabul University

Translated by: Zahra Amiri
Source: Daily Open Society, 609

Kabul University has separate dormitories for girls and boys and there are now more than 3,000 students living in these two dormitories.

In the girl’s dormitory there are around 1,600 students, most of them are from Badakhshan, Ghazni, Takhar, and Kunar provinces. In the dormitory, all of the employees are female, from managers to teachers, cooks, and cleaners are all female. Sports equipment and facilities are also available in the dormitory. Whoever is interested can participate in sports exercises in the dormitory.

However, students faced many problems the most important of which are:

First, low quality food. Unfortunately, in this dormitory diversified menus are not available and the foods are heavy at night. The acting dormitory head said that the menu is approved by the president, so the Ministry of Higher Education doesn’t have the authority to change the menu. Students eat the same food at breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

In every lunch students have rice, the concern is that if students don’t get more food diversification, it can lead to malnutrition. Although the authorities responded to the student demands, after a short time the aforementioned problems began again. A few students who have good economic situation can solve their problem, but the rest of students still face many problems.

The Ministry of Higher Education rejects students’ criticisms in relation to food and other issues. If the Ministry of Higher Education does not address the problems of students, the students say that they cannot learn effectively.

The second problem is that several students have to live in one room. The girl’s dormitory has the capacity of 1,200 students, and currently there are 1,600 students live in it. Each room is generally designed for four or five people; though dormitory officials have allowed six or even more students in each room and that has caused problems. For example, eight students live in one room, which disrupts the studying atmosphere and disrupts the sense of calmness. However, every night girls study their lessons with mobile light in order to not interrupt others. Fortunately, the Ministry of Higher Education has heard this problem and said that new dormitories will need to be constructed to solve this problem. The students want the Ministry of Higher Education to address and solve their problems.

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The Greek Forum of Refugees is a grantee of the Open Society Foundations.
In the case of the followers of the People's Temple, the once promised “socialist paradise” turned to be their burial place. The guns which were supposed to protect them, were pointed at them. Such Apostolic Socialism which promised that “those who remained drugged with the opiate of religion had to be brought to enlightenment” – socialism, reversed in bearing poisons to kill them. Like the deluded Germans during the Second World War, the over 900 followers of Jones were dreaming of their Utopia in Jonestown in the north of Guyana. These devotees had suffered from a state of self-alienation, a state in which due to the overwhelming power of propaganda and the effects of mass-psychology, individuals do not possess individual independent personalities. Even at a time when these deluded individuals had the chance, they would not be able to decide independently. I have been in situations where my personal individual independency is entirely lost in what the crowd chooses to do. When I was among the crowd, a collective psychological pressure took away the power of individual decision from me. Whatever the crowd did, be it breaking into the shops and looting the city, would be easily adapted by the individual self. This is partly because the responsibility is divided and thus a bad and immoral act is no longer received as seriously by the agent as it applies to him while being alone. In such circumstances one person thinks for all. And one person is the head and soul and the power of the whole community. People thought they were exceptionally special as Jim Jones offered something bigger for them by taking them to their utopia. As the real face of Jim was uncovered, his paradoxical sexual ambitions and cunning personality became public due to the media and Jim fled from California. Jim decided to take away his followers to Guyana and call his city “Jonestown.” In Jonestown, there was only Jim’s voice was talking to his devotees even in the middle of the night. “Give us our liberty or give us our death,” he would say. He was answering and talking and thinking for the entire town. The most forbidden thing for the crowd was to talk about “wishing to be alive.” When nuances of disagreement took root among a few of the followers, he used force to maintain law and order. Such a reaction is what some governments do too. Most of the regimes use force and coercive methods when they happen to sense that their ideological propaganda is not working well. Under such pressures, like the last days of Hitler, Jim was changed a lot. He was taking drugs and was getting paranoid. “We always need be vigilant about our movement. We had to build our city outside of the reach of the morality of the US.”

In an interview with a senior citizen who had survived from the collective suicide, the following statements were made. “I saw equality about races, the good things they were doing. Black church led by the white minister. He understood how it was to be treated differently. He would say sell your home and don’t depend on the 20% but give the money to the church. We would feel that if we gave our homes to the church, we would be taken care of.”

In the course of human history, religion, besides being a magnificent tool for liberating people has also endangered their lives and often brought atrocities and terror instead of the fascinating dreams. The historic city of death (Teotihuacan) in north western New Mexico, the general massacres of ethnic cleansing under the slogan of Nazi in Germany (Auschwitz), the religious purification of Hazaras by Abdul Rahman Khan in 1890’s under the name of Sharia in Afghanistan are some of the very few similar ordeals of what religious and ideological dreams have imposed upon the human generations in recent centuries.

About the author: Ali Reza Yasa is the founder and Chairman of Star Educational Society. He is the only instructor who has been teaching at Star for the past 17 years. He has an M.A. in Central Asian Studies from American University of Central Asia with a concentration in Anthropology. He also holds the Editor-in-Chief position of the Interstellar Bulletin, Star’s Weekly.
About the author: Hadi Zaher was the first graduate of Quetta’s branch of Star Educational Society in the year 1999. He has an MA from the University of Wollongong in Australia and is currently a post-graduate student at the University of New South Wales.

Stories

My Grandmother Told Me

V ol.1, No. 20

When I turned 9, like the girls of my age in the village and beyond, I had to observe fast. The boys had it easy; they could wait until they were 16 before having to do the same. I was young, quick on my feet, and hence the family shepherd. Shepherding was exhausting work. I had to go up and down the hills all day, chase and look after the herd. It didn’t make fasting was any easier.

The summer days were long, the Sun shone bright and hot like the Sun. Any easier work was exhausting work. I had to go up and down the hills all day, chase and look after the herd. It didn’t make fasting was any easier. I had to go up and down the hills all day, chase and look after the herd. It didn’t make fasting was any easier. If I did, I would be punished by my parents, and I had to have food for the family.

After observing fast all day, we gathered around the earth-oven where my late mother baked bread. We quenched all that thirst and hunger with a piece of bread, and water. Occasionally, mother made tea. In that hot weather, we would rather have that than anything else. For Fath-Shahri we would eat bread with yogurt. The food in Winter wasn’t good or plentiful to begin with. By observing fast, we just made it so much worse for ourselves.

To eat apples or plentiful to begin with. By observing fast, we just made it so much worse for ourselves.

I had to observe fast. I had to turn 9, like the girls of my age in the village and beyond, I had to observe fast. The boys had it easy; they could wait until they were 16 before having to do the same. They just observed fast, we just made it so much worse for ourselves.

Hadi Zaher was the first graduate of Quetta’s branch of Star Educational Society in the year 1999. He has an MA from the University of Wollongong in Australia and is currently a post-graduate student at the University of New South Wales.

Sohrab Sepehri

(1928-1980), notable Iranian poet and painter

Sohrab Sepehri was born in Kashan on October 7, 1928; a very talented artist and a gifted poet. Sepehri shot to stardom with the publication of The Water’s Footfall which was subsequently followed by The Traveler and The Green Volume. Sepehri died of blood cancer in Tehran in 1988.

Sepehri translated speech into a language hitherto unknown to the Iranians. A pioneer poet, he utilized western forms and deconstructed the normal way of poetry. His use of new forms in poetry makes him complicated to understand. Yet, readers find themselves so attached to and his poetry that there remains no room for boredom. He is a true worshipper who loves God and His creatures, believing that one has to plant the flower of love in his heart for the entire universe. To Sohrab, love is everything.

Well-versed in Buddhism, mysticism and western traditions, he mingled the western concepts with eastern ones, thereby creating a kind of poetry unsurpassed in the history of Persian literature. To him, new forms are new means to express his thoughts and feelings. His poetry is, indeed, like a journey. Every time you read him you understand him differently. There is a bottomless ocean of meanings in his poetry.

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“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them”

An interview with Assadullah Ghalib Rahimi, telecommunications expert and Star teacher

n you briefly introduce yourself? My name is Assadullah Rahimi. I graduated from Habibia High School in 2005 and with my bachelor’s degree in Physics from Kabul University in 2009 where I did my thesis on electromagnetic waves. Now I am working as a Frequency Management Professional Member at Spectrum Management Department of Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (ATRA). In addition, I have the honor of serving my people as an English instructor at Star Education Society and being a member of Star Family.

How long have you been in these jobs? I have been working at ATRA for the past five years and at Star for more than six years.

Can you please give me some details? What is ATRA? Afghanistan Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ATRA), is an independent Afghan government Regulatory agency. It functions within the framework of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and is responsible to regulate, supervise, promote, and develop telecom services, and the telecom market in the country. The Spectrum Management department is responsible for assigning and selecting the radio frequency Bands for broadcasters, GSM operators, internet service providers, and others. Broadcasters (TV channels, FM Radios) As a Frequency Management Professional Member in the non-broadcasting section of Spectrum Management Department, I deal with frequency assignment for GSM/3G operators in Afghanistan.

What major activities have you done at STAR and ATRA? At Star, besides teaching my classes, I have worked as a team leader for Intermediate Classes, and in the Evaluation and Capacity Building team. At ATRA, besides my main duties, I have done research on the feasibility of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) implementation in Afghanistan. MNP is a new mobile technology that enables mobile subscribers to change their service providers without having to change their existing phone numbers if the subscribers are not satisfied with the services of their service provider. I have also participated as an Afghan delegate in several workshops, seminars, symposiums and international meetings held in different countries like Switzerland, China, Japan, India, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam.

How do you evaluate the situation of Telecommunications and Information Technology in Afghanistan? Fortunately, Afghanistan is one of the countries which have made great progress in a short period in telecommunications in the past 13 years. Previously, Afghans would have to travel to neighboring countries like Pakistan to make an international call. Since its rebirth in its modern form in April 2002, the first private telecom company was authorized to provide mobile (GSM) services, the telecom sector in Afghanistan has witnessed an unprecedented and phenomenal growth and has become the biggest revenue generating sector. Now there are five Mobile (GSM/3G) operators and more than 50 licensed Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the country. Telecom services (mostly mobile) are now available in all 34 provinces having their own satellite by the name of “AfghanSat” and migrating from analog to digital TV are other great achievements that Afghanistan has in this sector.

How did joining Star impact your life? In 2005, I learned about Star from my friends. When I came to Star for studying English, I met Mr. Yasa and I was really impressed by his English and his motivation. Passing the placement test, I got admission and studied one semester and then because of university entrance exam preparations, I left Star and joined back in 2007. In 2009 I earned my English diploma and started working as an English instructor at Star. My English skills are a privilege in my working career. The ability to do some online training courses and attending high-level regional and international meetings, and getting membership in one of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) study groups was not possible for me without knowing English.

What are some of your future goals? I have a short term and a long term goal. The short term one is to apply for the Fulbright Scholarship and to do my graduate studies in Master of Science in Telecommunication Management in one of the U.S. universities. The long term goal is to work as a Telecommunication Expert in International Telecommunication Union (ITU) headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

How do you think you can accomplish your goals? To answer your question, I would just quote one of Walt Disney’s famous sayings which says, “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.” So I am doing my best to have the courage to pursue my dreams and to accomplish my goals.

When did a big change occur in your life? How did it influence you? I was studying school when the Taliban were ruling Afghanistan. There was no hope for getting an education. My life changed when the Taliban Regime collapsed and I transferred to Habibia High School. Finding new, hard-working and motivated classmates and a completely different educational environment influenced my life positively and motivated me to learn more.

What is an achievement that you are most proud of? In 2005, I was selected as a member of Study Group 9 (SG9) of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is one of the oldest specialized agencies of the UN. The Study Groups of ITU’s Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) assemble experts from around the world to develop international standards known as ITU-T Recommendations which act as defining elements in the global infrastructure of information and communication technologies (ICTs). SG9 carries out studies on the use of telecommunications systems in the distribution of television and sound programs supporting advanced capabilities such as ultra-high definition and 3D TV. My membership in SG9 is a huge step toward my future goals and makes me feel very proud.

You recently attended a workshop in Vietnam. What can you tell us about your experience there? Yes, actually it was an ITU-symposium on Satellite which was preceded by a workshop on efficient use of Spectrum/Orbit resources. It was organized by ITU and the Ministry of Information and Communications of Socialist Republic of Vietnam. For me, as a Frequency Spectrum Management Professional Member, it was very useful and I got a lot of experiences especially in the field of Spectrum Management. I learned new methods of frequency allocation, assignment and get familiar with new international standards.

What are your favorite hobbies and interests? I sometimes listen to music and go to gym. I am also interested in photograpy and playing soccer.

What is your message to students at Star? Star is not just a language center. It is a window of hope and aims to make youth shine brightly in the sky of education. Star students and teachers have secured great scholarships in some of the best universities around the globe. So my message for students at Star is that they should follow the footsteps of those successful Star students and teachers and shine brighter in their educational and working careers.

“...My English skills are a privilege in my working career and [many of my achievements would not have been possible] without knowing English.”