

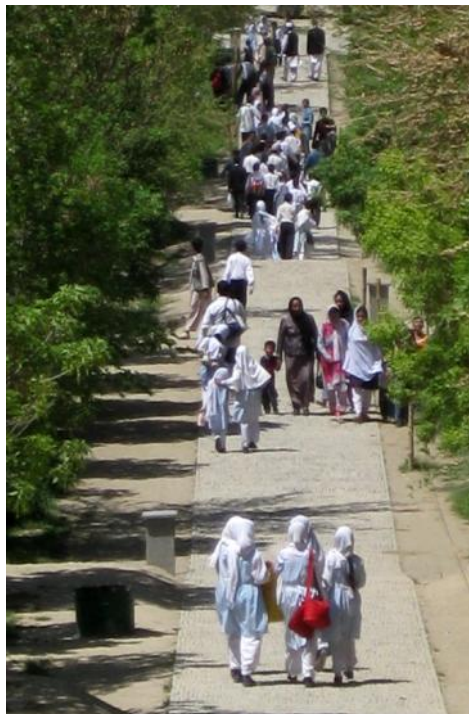


AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Programme

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING

To date, more than 700 women and men have received vocational training in carpentry, sewing, embroidery, glass-blowing and weaving of carpets and kelims, as part of efforts to contribute to improving the livelihoods of households in Districts 1 & 7 in Kabul, and in the old city of Herat. Surveys of those who have completed the courses suggest that a good proportion have been able to make use of their newly-gained skills, either as employees in local enterprises and workshops, or through home-based activities. While it is always difficult to measure the precise contribution that improved skills has on the household economy in such circumstances, efforts will continue to monitor the impact of the vocational training and ensure that it responds to the actual needs of urban families.

BAGHE BABUR

During July, the number of visitors to the restored garden passed the one million mark, based on records kept since the establishment of the independent Baghe Babur Trust in 2008. Nearly ten times the number of visitors who came to the garden in 2006 are projected to come during the course of 2010. Due in part to regular special events in Baghe Babur, the annual revenue generated by the operation this year is expected to increase by 48% over last year's revenue.

Although the sale of outputs from the vocational training is not the primary objective, there has been a keen interest in the woodwork, hand-blown glass, kelims and carpets (see image on right of Turkmen 'snake' motif derived from a fragment of an antique rug) produced by the various workshops. Revenue generated from sales of outputs is used to meet operational costs, supplementing resources made available by the Norwegian government to sustain the vocational training through 2011.



FLOODING IN KABUL

Investments made by AKTC in low-lying residential areas of District 7 proved their effectiveness during the flooding caused by downpours south of Kabul in early August. Part of a wider programme of community-managed upgrading measures implemented between 2004 and 8 in neighbourhoods close to Baghe Babur, some of 700 metres of stone walling and gabions were constructed along the banks of the Kabul. Due to the risks of seasonal flooding, these areas have historically been used for market gardening but, with growing pressure on urban housing, have been built over in recent decades.

HERAT

AFGHANISTAN OBSERVED

On 1st August, an exhibition of drawings, prints and photographs of Afghanistan from the collection of the British Library was opened in the restored Chahar Suq cistern in the old city of Herat. Having been previously shown in Kabul during May/June, additional images of Herat were added to the landscapes, views of historic monuments and portraits that date from between 1830 and 1920. There have been some 3000 visitors to date to the exhibition, which is supported by the World Collections Programme and the Norwegian government. Head of Visual Materials at the British Library, John Falconer attended the opening in Herat, and subsequently gave a talk in Kabul, as part of a regular series of lectures in the restored Timur Shah mausoleum.



QALA IKHTYARUDDIN

With the approval of a second tranche of funding from the US State Department, the primary focus of conservation work has shifted to the upper enclosure of the historic citadel of Herat. Once the seat of the rulers of the Herat region, the residential quarters in this enclosure were partially demolished in the 1950s, reportedly to supply materials for the construction of new barracks elsewhere. Fragments of decorated plasterwork (see right) found in accumulated spoil along the southern perimeter of the citadel, have been recovered, documented and stored. Following detailed surveys of the surviving structure of *pakhsa* (hand-laid earth), mud and fired bricks, several collapsed domes in the north and western ranges have been reconstructed, along with brick masonry walls surrounding the courtyard that was a focus of excavations undertaken by the German Archaeological Institute during 2007/8.



In order to stabilize the heavily-eroded eastern side of Qala Ikhtyaruddin, a series of brick masonry buttresses are being constructed, between which a surface of stone paving will protect the steep slope, which comprises sections of *pakhsa*, brick and stone walling. Upon completion of the stabilization measures on the slope, the three brick towers along this elevation will be strengthened, along with the bases of sections of walling that show signs of past settlement.



POSTEEN DOZ HOUSE

Conservation work resumed in July on Ghulam Haider Posteen Doz house in Abdullah Mesri quarter of the old city. The painted decoration in this house was described in AKTC Newsletter #17 of January/February 2009. The second stage of the works, co-funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, entails reconstruction collapsed sections of brick masonry, along with conservation of external timber screens along the upper colonnade (see above). Following this, surviving areas of decorative internal plaster will be conserved, along with distinctive moulded brickwork on the courtyard elevations of the house.



For more information about AKTC's programme in Afghanistan, contact us at
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