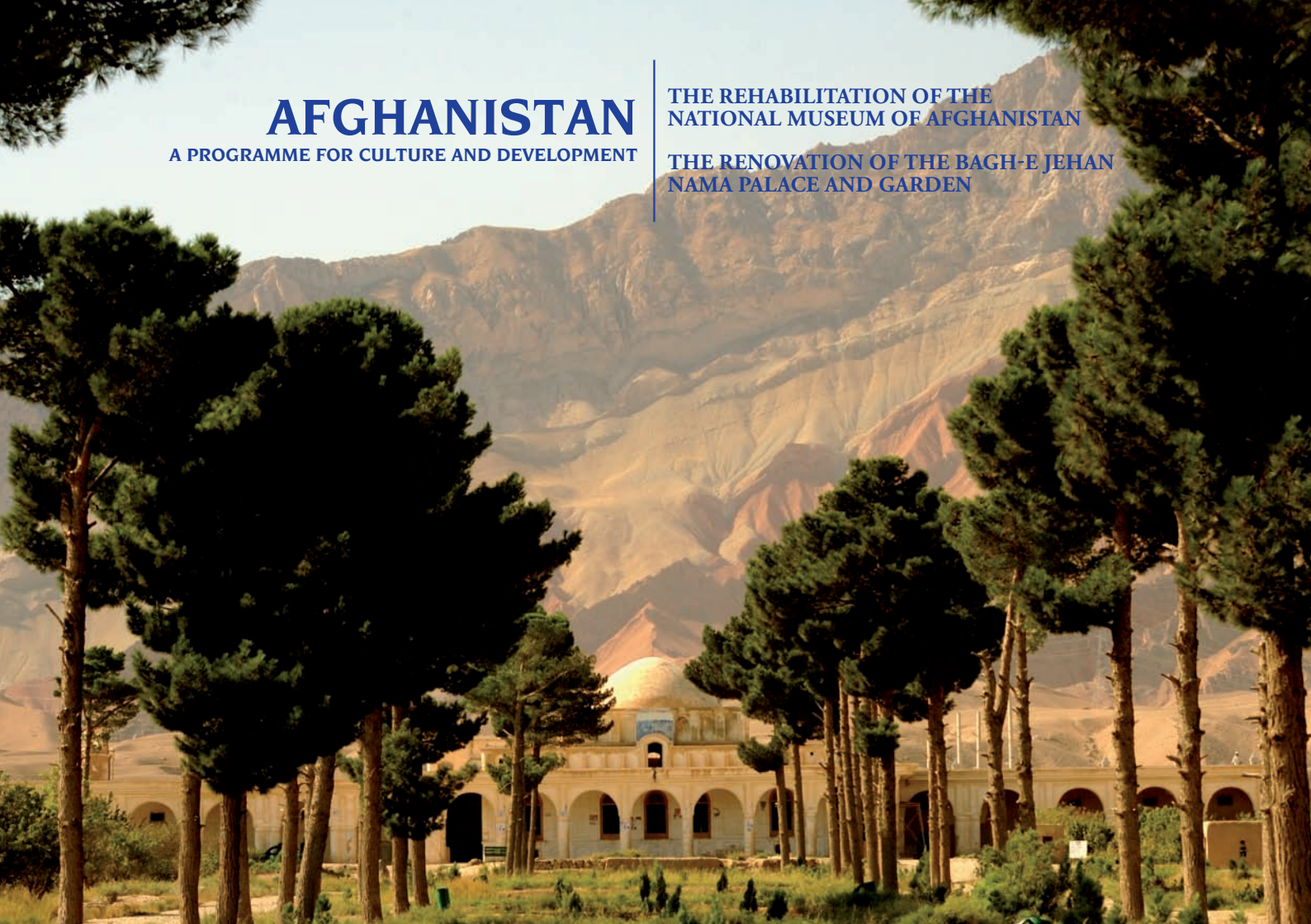


AFGHANISTAN

A PROGRAMME FOR CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

THE REHABILITATION OF THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN

THE RENOVATION OF THE BAGH-E JEHAN
NAMA PALACE AND GARDEN





WORDS OF WELCOME

HIS EXCELLENCY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE MR OMAR SULTAN

“We need to step away from the culture of war to the culture of peace. We would like to show the world that we have a culture that we want to share. Afghanistan is not killing, bombing or burkha. We want to create awareness for the young generation of Afghans. Some of them have grown up in other countries. For example the looting that is taking place in the archaeological sites. You cannot stop it without the people. You cannot get their approval by force. We need to have the cooperation of the people.”

“We have already started at the National Museum in Kabul to bring kids to the museum to come and look. I was very happy when I went the other day to the museum and saw young people from the university and our curators explaining the history to them. The building is ready for visitors. We have showcases. Some exhibitions have been held and I would like to see every two-three months a different exhibition.”

“Of course we have economic difficulties. I would like to ask the whole world to help us, to build provincial museums, because Afghanistan is not just Kabul and we have to respect other provinces. We need such museums all around Afghanistan. All Afghans have a right to see their own antiquities and heritage. That will make them feel more important, more respected.”



PATHWAYS TO NEW PARTNERSHIPS

View over the palace garden of the Bagh-e Jehan
Nama Palace, Kholm North Afghanistan.

PATHWAYS TO NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Cultural heritage is connected with the past and Afghanistan has a long and rich past to feast on. But cultural heritage holds also a promise for the future and it is this cultural heritage that can help Afghanistan on their way to a promising future. Culture is the cement of communities and can play a crucial role in the building of a nation. The Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE) has a mission to participate in international partnerships. We are committed to cooperate in programmes that have chosen culture as its initial step towards capacity building and in programmes that facilitate the empowerment of communities in ways that contribute to economic development.

Since 2006 the CIE, with generous support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participates in an innovative capacity building programme initiated by the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan for their national museums. Together we work at the rehabilitation of the National Museum in Kabul and on our other farsighted and exciting project, a new regional ethnographical museum at the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace in North Afghanistan. Our programme provided the possibility, which explores the potential of international partners, to contribute in the rebuilding of the cultural sector and to develop models for international cooperation in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has a clear and positive conception of where it wants to go with their cultural heritage sector. The further development of a professional international network is clearly part of the plans for a sustainable cultural sector. International support in the previous years was already overwhelming and heart warming. Those firm and fruitful partnerships have very positive results for the people of Afghanistan and we should be determined to build upon this because Afghanistan wants to be part of growing and sustainable networks.

For that reason the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan and the National Museum invite the international cultural

sector to open up their networks for Afghanistan and make their expertise available for the further development of the museum sector. In partnerships one finds the will, resources, ideas, strategies and the enthusiasm that is critical to make a reality of the plans for the future of cultural heritage in Afghanistan.

The CIE already makes its network available to its colleagues in Afghanistan and we are honoured by the gesture of the Afghanistan people to work with them in their quest for constructive and meaningful change. We are looking forward to welcome you as well in this stimulating and ambitious network. •

- Robert Parthesius, Director CIE

A PROGRAMME FOR CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Culture and Development stands for the strengthening of the cultural dimension in development cooperation. Cultural projects can contribute to sustainable socio-economic development. The cultural dimension in projects can enlarge the effectiveness of the development cooperation. But more important, culture, and cultural heri-

tage more in particular, represents the cultural identity of a country. The historical layers of heritage can function as a bridge between cultures and between countries. The Netherlands developed a policy for this and we are glad to participate under this policy with our activities in Afghanistan.

Since 2006 the CIE assists in a programme and coordinate a Programme for Culture and De-

velopment in Afghanistan. The main objective of the programme is the preservation and reconstruction of the cultural heritage of Afghanistan and the re-establishment of the museum sector in Kabul and Kholm. In cooperation with the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan a programme is formulated to achieve this. The keywords of our programme are capacity building and local ownership.

The programme consists of the rehabilitation of the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul, one of the most important symbols of the rich cultural heritage of the country. The other part of the programme is based in Kholm, North Afghanistan. The CIE is involved in the renovation of the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace and supports the aim to establish a regional museum in it. •



Building activities with the traditional pakhsa system at the palace garden wall of the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace.



An Afghan school class visits the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN

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At the end of Kabul's Darul Aman Road, at the outskirts of the city, you find Afghanistan's National Museum. In front are the ruins of the former royal palace, at the back the remains of the archaeological institute. Once the museum was part of an ambitious plan for a new modern Kabul during the times of Amanullah Khan, a modernist ruler in the style of Atatürk. The idea for a National Museum of Afghanistan emerged in 1919. It formed part of the process of po-

litical, cultural and social developments that characterized this period in the beginning of the twentieth century of Afghan history.

In 1931 the collections were placed in its present home at the edge of Kabul on the former palace grounds. It was the intention to provide a safe haven for the treasures of Afghan culture. As far back as classical times, Afghanistan was an important area that drew on and assimilated a variety of cultures, and spread their influence via the Silk Road linking the pri-

mary cultural centres. This variety of influences prompted investiga-

"We need the youth, educated youth to work here and this year we are lucky we have four of the best students of the department who have joined us. They show the visitors around and explain things to them. We are extremely lucky. The future of the museum must be in the hands of the youth."

- Omara Khan Masoudi, Director, National Museum, Afghanistan

tions by western researchers along the routes on which the Europeans

and Greeks accessed Afghanistan with its wealth of remnants from the past. This rich collection made the museum world famous during the second half of the twentieth century.

UNSAFE PERIOD FOR THE COLLECTION AND MUSEUM STAFF

In the 1970's a painful period for the National Museum began. On 26 December 1979 the Soviet invasion started and caused great political instability and the destruction of the economical and cultural in-

frastructure. The security situation in Kabul continued to deteriorate and in 1988 the National Museum, in consultation with the Ministry of Information and Culture and security forces, proposed that a number of works from the museum be transferred to the custodianship of the then President of the Republic, Mohammad Najibullah.

Between 1992 and 1994 guerilla fighting devastated Kabul. In 1994 the National Museum was being used as a military base and defensive position and was hit by a rocket and burst into flames. In 1996 the Ministry of Information and Culture decided to remove the remaining collection to museum stores and the Hotel Kabul just a week before the Taliban seized power. The pieces brought to this hotel have been spared, but the museum stores have been destroyed after the installation of the

Taliban. At the start of 2001 the National Museum faced further disaster as the Taliban decided that all images must be destroyed. The

"We have already started at the museum- bringing kids to the museum to come and look. I was very happy when I went the other day to the museum and saw young people from the university and our curators explaining the history to them. The building is ready for visitors. We have showcases. Some exhibitions have been held and I would like to see every two-three months a different exhibition."

- His Excellency Omar S. Sultan, Deputy Minister of Culture Afghanistan

Taliban installed a special group that was charged with this task, they destroyed around 2500 works

of art. The work of rebuilding the museum and the restoration and repatriation of the collection began in 2002 and continues till today.

REBUILDING THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

Since 2006 the CIE is closely involved with the National Museum. The rehabilitation programme follows a step-by-step approach. Our first activities were centred on the temporary exhibition on the historic bazaar of Tashqurghan. This created the perfect opportunity for upgrading the interior of the museum and to improve the conditions of some exhibition rooms. The museum was fizzling of activities and the exhibition, the renovated central hall and the upgraded exhibition rooms were received with great enthusiasm.

This first achievement, which sets a benchmark for the future museum, paved the way for a more



structural approach in the rehabilitation process. Together with the Afghan partners we were able to develop plans for the next stage. Surveys on security and structure of the building were done and jointly we create the conditions for a new permanent exhibition for the National Museum of Afghanistan.

In the summer of 2010 the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture and the CIE are preparing for the next step of the programme: broadening network and partnerships to make the future of the museum sustainable. In close cooperation with our Afghan partners, and based on the already existing mission and vision documents of

The sign before the entrance at the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul: 'A Nation Stays Alive When Its Culture Stays Alive'.

the international community, we developed a plan with six stepping-stones toward a new permanent exhibition for the National Museum. Three of them concern realisation of our goal, the other three are aiming at the sustainability of the project. Each of them falls apart in smaller projects and activities for

"The ethnographic objects are the identification of our country. Our customs, our clothes, are what identify us as Afghans; they are distinct. The role of the museum is very important in displaying this. It is important for people of Afghanistan – those who lived outside as refugees- to learn who we are, what we are."
- Fauzia Hamraz Safi, Director of the Ethnographic Department of the National Museum Kabul

which the Ministry of Information and Culture and the National Museum are looking for funding,

knowledge and partnerships. We are happy to inform you about this in detail so feel free to contact us.

THE STEPPING-STONES CONCERNING REALISATION:

1. UPGRADE OF THE STRUCTURE AND SECURITY

A lot of renovation activities to improve the structure and safety of the building have already been realised, such as a new emergency roof, the improvement of the entrance, new floors, painting activities, preparing exhibition areas and securing of the windows and depots. However, the upgrade of the structure and security of the museum complex involves further improvement of the building to make it a better home for the collection. Training of a security and safety



management team has begun and focuses on the basis of a safe environment for the staff and the collection. More training and equipment are necessary to make a secure and safe National Museum sustainable and an example for the new regional museums in Afghanistan.

2. CONSERVE THE COLLECTION AND MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE

A good conserved and inventoried collection is the core of the National Museum and the new generation of curators need training to become the expert on their collection. National Geographic already contributed to this process of inventorying the collection. Still a large part of the collection needs to be restored due to the destructive cultural character of the war. Next to this, a large part of the collection is also missing since it has been looted during the rule of the Taliban. All these ob-

"It was during the time of the Taliban that I was here. I do not remember who was in charge of the museum. It was difficult to protect the objects inside the museum. There was no roof. There was no storage to protect the objects from the sun and the snow. A rocket had damaged the front door. No one came those days. There were no visitors. Nothing was happening." – Kaka Nadir, cleaner and guard at the National Museum of Afghanistan

jects are still part of the collection of the National Museum and it is the declared aim of the museum to retrieve this missing part of the collection. Last year intercepted Afghan objects at the Airport of London Heathrow have been returned to the National Museum.

3. DEVELOP EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions are the means for a museum to tell a story and the

National Museum of Afghanistan would like to tell, more than anything else, the rich and diverse history of Afghanistan and the important role of culture as binding factor in society. Temporary exhibitions have already been organised and in the future His Excellency the Deputy Minister of Culture Mr Omar Sultan would like to see new temporary exhibitions every three months. To realise these exhibitions training is needed and more display material is welcome.

THE STEPPING-STONES CONCERNING SUSTAINABILITY:

4. IMPROVE MUSEUM MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL FINANCES

A well-organised and stable organisation is essential for a sustainable future of the museum and the op-

portunities to develop the museum with new exhibitions, loans and international cooperation with other museums. UNESCO already wrote an extensive report on 'Safeguarding Afghanistan's moveable cultural heritage; a framework for the rehabilitation of the National Museum and provincial museums of Afghanistan' and the CIE developed this report together with the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture into this practical stepping-stones tool to assist in the improvement of the museum management.

5. INCREASE INCOME THROUGH COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Different pathways to generate income are important for a museum and the development of commercial activities, like publications and a museum shop. A great first step has been made with the trav-

elling and world-renowned exhibition 'Hidden Afghanistan' that has been exhibited in more than ten museums worldwide.

6. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR THE MUSEUM AND ITS COLLECTION

Museums tell stories to the public and have the ability to teach about culture, history and society. The awareness of having a museum in Kabul where inhabitants can learn about the rich Afghan cultural heritage, after having been deprived from any cultural or historical education for a long time, is crucial for the cultural development of Afghanistan. Already thousands of school children and students from Kabul University visit the National Museum where the curators tell them about the history of the objects and the museum itself. Together with partners

a special education programme for children and youngsters can be developed to reach the new and promising Afghan generation. •

"Earlier the inside of the museum resembled a jail. It used to be so dark and dirty. We slowly worked on it to change it, built cabinets for the display of carpets, which used to lie on the ground. If we are not interested in our National Museum it shows we do not respect our culture. If we do not see what is there how can we get a feeling for our culture? I have taken my friends there and now they are taking their other friends to see the museum."

- Mustafa Rawan, Project Manager, AFIR Architects and Planners, Kabul and Kholm

TOWARDS A PERMANENT EXHIBITION

FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

REALISATION

1. STRUCTURE AND SECURITY

1. Security survey and structural survey
2. Upgrade security organisation
3. Upgrade of the construction
4. Electronic security systems
5. Landscaping
6. Architectural upgrade interior
7. New wing

2. COLLECTIONS

1. Collection policy
2. Depot provisions
3. Registration
4. Photography
5. Conservation
6. Object selection
7. Object acquisition
8. Library and archives

3. EXHIBITIONS

1. Exhibition planning
2. Technical aspects permanent exhibition
3. Museum furnishing
4. Object information display
5. Catalogue
6. New media in exhibition

TRAINING

SUSTAINABILITY

4. MANAGEMENT & FINANCES

1. Human resources
2. Fund raising
3. Museum management
4. Museum finances

5. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Museum shop
2. Collection as asset
3. Donations

6. PUBLIC AWARENESS

1. Website
2. Audience development
3. Education
4. Temporary exhibition and events
5. Promotion materials
6. Publications
7. Media

TRAINING





Present restoration activities at the
National Museum of Afghanistan

INTO THE FUTURE

The drive of the Afghans to create a world class National Museum in Kabul is overwhelming. Enormous steps have been made after 2001. International assistance however within the six stepping-stones presented, remains very important to assist the staff of the National Museum in developing their expertise, network and home for

the collection it deserves, in order to share their rich cultural heritage with the world.

Together we can bring the National Museum back to its former glories and beyond and enable the National Museum to take a leadership role in the empowerment of the cultural heritage sector in Afghanistan. •



The pakhsa is made in special fields for the traditional reconstruction of the garden walls of the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace.

THE RENOVATION OF THE BAGH-E JEHAN NAMA PALACE AND GARDEN

THE RENOVATION OF THE BAGH-E JEHAN NAMA PALACE AND GARDEN

Originally built in 1890-1892 by Amir Abdur Rahman, the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace has been restored and renovated in the beginning of the 1970's by Sultan Fayaz. The palace had a very large enclosed garden where the local community could have social events. The plan was to turn the palace into a museum after the renovation activities in the 1970's. An earthquake in 1976, resulting in serious damage, prevented this idea from

being implemented. In the following periods of conflict and civil war, a lot of damage and neglect turned both the palace and the palace garden into hollow skeletons. Starting in 1980 subsequently the Russians, mujahedeen and the Taliban have used the palace until 2001. They have all left their influence on this monument and an extra dimension to the history of the palace. In 2007 the original plans for a museum could be picked up and the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace community heritage programme started.

A FUTURE TOURIST ATTRACTION

With the potential to become a tourist attraction, the option of revitalizing the plan for establishing a museum in the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace was reconsidered. The government of Afghanistan had already established plans to create regional museums and the previous aim to make a museum at the palace fitted into this regional approach.

One of the main factors in favour of a future use of the building as a regional museum for the Af-

ghans is that the location is close to where the highway from Kabul to Mazar-e Sharif enters the northern plains; a location that

"Everyone needs doors and windows to their house don't they? That's what makes this a good profession."

- Saifatuallah, 18 years, apprentice at carpentry workshop in the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace project.

cannot be overlooked by anybody travelling in either direction. For many people passing, a stop at the

impressive Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace complex will be attractive. Secondly, the walled-in garden, approximately 328 m. x 378 m., around the palace, could turn, after structural improvement of the grounds, once more into a highly attractive picnic spot for the local population and travellers. Thirdly, representatives of the Ministry addressed that a museum, apart from covering the history and culture of the northern plains from Kholm (the city in the neighbourhood of the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace), can act as a site museum, which can give special attention to the historic urban centre of Tashqurghan as it existed into the 1980's.

THE LOCAL APPROACH

The local partner of the CIE in Afghanistan, AFIR architects have been preparing the project on location in Kholm and Kabul. AFIR

Gardener Fazl Ahmed remembers wandering through the gardens in the seventies when it had fruit trees in abundance: "the garden had every kind of fruit tree. Peach, apricot, almond, grapes, figs and pomegranates, mulberry, yellow plums, pomegranates, sour plums. When the Russian soldiers came the mayor told me: 'these soldiers are our guests and will stay for 10-15 days. Give them the keys.' I handed over the keys to them but they never left."
- Fazl Ahmed, 74 years, third generation gardener, Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace.

Architects prepared a survey, measured the site and the buildings and they prepared a photographic survey. In addition to this an experienced structural Afghan engineer did a first survey. The project itself is developed in close interaction and cooperation

with experts from the Department for the Preservation and Restoration of Historical Monuments of the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Director of Museums of Afghanistan, Dr Masoudi. In two 'project definition workshops' that were organized in Kabul, many other stakeholders gave their input for the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace.

For the local stakeholders in Kholm many informal meetings were organised to discuss the renovation of the palace and its future functions. Meetings with the head of Police, the National Security representative, and the representatives of the regional and local Ministry of Information and Culture took place. Master masons and gardeners have been consulted for the right approach of the work. In everything that is done in the programme, Afghan ownership has the highest priority. A vision for a

participatory process that includes local people is vital for this project.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is the keyword in the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace project. All the renovation activities concerning the repair work on the palace and the garden walls are characterised by the high level of craftsmanship and historical awareness. The building material is moreover specially made for the palace in the region or otherwise purchased in the region. For example, the pakhsa is a special combination of mud, clay and dung that is mixed and densified by bulls in special fields surrounding the palace. The pakhsa is used for the reconstruction of the garden walls. It is a traditional craft that is executed by pakhsa Ustads (Dari for master) at the palace. Local solutions and responses to challenges of restoration are very

important for a sustainable future of the restored building.

For all renovation projects, capacity building programmes are developed so that young and local craftsmen of the region are stimulated in their craft, from carpenters to masons, gardeners, brick makers and lime mixers, they are all involved. Through capacity building people gain knowledge of the place and the history of the region they live in. Besides stimulating the local economy, understanding of the past and development of cultural awareness are included in the capacity building.

COMMUNITY & OWNERSHIP

Before the war period began, the garden of the palace had a very important role as social meeting place for the local families. The communities have indicated that it is very

Fazl Ahmed, the gardener at the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace garden.



important for them to have this special place again. A landscape vision and a replanting plan have been designed by our local partner together with the elderly of the local community and the previous gardener who can still remember how the garden looked like before 1980. Next to this, a plan to improve the irrigation facilities has been made. In the autumn of 2009, the first fruit and nut trees were planted in the garden and in April 2010 more trees were planted, up to a total of almost 80 different native tree species in one garden.

PUBLIC CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

To be able to create historical awareness amongst the new Afghan generations that have only experienced war in the last three decades, an education plan is being developed in close cooperation with

regional schoolteachers. Our local partner AFIR Architects trained the teachers for the specific 'Kholm for kids' education programme. They visualised the history of the region for the children on big sheets and they visited the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace as part of their preparation. The programme has already reached more than 500 local children (boys and girls) in 2009 and already up to 1355 in 2010.

"If you involve the local community as they (the CIE/AFIR) have done, in this project they will clean it, protect it and preserve it. If you just close the doors and carry out the project people will not be interested. We make this for the people."

- Abdul Ahad Abassi, Director of Preservation and Restoration of Historical Monuments at the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan



Making a new pakhsa layer on the garden wall of the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace.

"Bagh-e Jehan Nama was a good military target since the Russians were living inside. We wanted to attack and capture it. We made home-made bombs and threw them on the compound. We used a mixture of raisins, soap, oil, and acid mixed with fuel and we would light them and throw them in. Sometimes we would get rockets from Pakistan and fire them on the Bagh-e Jehan Nama. I knew they had a secret passage under the Bagh. They also used it as a jail for their prisoners."

- Ghulam Rasool, former mujahedeen fighter and currently foreman on the Bagh e Jehan Nama project.

INTO THE FUTURE

The Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace is turning once again into a beautiful palace and this time a palace that can function as a museum to show all the visitors the ethnographic heritage of the region. The local ownership and commitment that is purchased in this programme is the firm basis for a sustainable future of this first ethnographic museum in Afghanistan.

The renovated garden with the newly planted fruit and nut trees fulfils a very important social role for the local community. It is a meeting place for picnics and other leisure activities. This binding factor of culture and the importance of a focus on culture and development can't be made clearer than by the locals who use and develop the Bagh-e Jehan Nama Palace and garden. •



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

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Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE)

The CIE is an independent, non-profit organization for international knowledge exchange about the heritage of the European expansion and international heritage cooperation.



Contact Information:

Centre for International Heritage Activities
PO Box 11125
2301 EC Leiden
The Netherlands
+31(0)71 5168 890
www.heritage-activities.org
info@heritage-activities.org

