

Skateistan's MOST POPULAR MAGAZINE

محبوبترین مجله اسکیتستان

PUL



ISSUE 1



EDITORIAL PROFILE



Hamed Razi, Chief Editor

Hamed Razi was born in 1370 on the Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul. He studied his elementary school at ACD and graduated from Isteqlal High School. He is now a student of Law and Political Science at Kabul University. Hamed Razi's special skills are photography, design, drawing, painting, fiction and meshwork. He was an advisor on domestic issues in Isteqlal high school and currently volunteers with Skateistan because he loves to work for the children of his country.



Mariam Stanekzai, senior writer

Mariam Stanekzai, 20, was born in Kabul city to an educated family. She has lived and witnessed the good and bad in Kabul over the years and is a student of Kabul University in her 2nd year of engineering. She has worked at Skateistan since it opened. Skating is a part of her life and it has brought a lot of changes to her life. She chose to study engineering so she could serve her country and people, and she's thankful for the support of her family in her choice.



Ahmad Suleiman Shegarf, Editor

Ahmad Suleiman Shegarf was born into an educated and open minded family in Afghanistan. Since his childhood he was fond of studying. After he graduated from Ahmad Shah Abdali high school of Kabul, he taught calligraphy and is now a second year student of Engineering. He also studies English, computers and science to improve his knowledge. Suleiman enjoys skateboarding and it's his favourite sport to play. His message to his peers and other youngsters is that girls and boys should gain knowledge from the cradle to the grave, and sport is a part of life.



Ahmad Noman Stanekzai

Ahmad Noman Stanekzai, 16, was born in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. He comes from an educated family but is keen to use his knowledge to support poor children who work in the street for to earn money for their families' daily food. He is in 9th grade at school. Ahmad has worked for one year in Skateistan as a volunteer. In the future he hopes to be a successful man and a professional skater.



Mohammad Bilal

Mohammad Bilal is originally from the Khost province of Afghanistan and he lives with his family in the Shah Shahid district of Kabul. He is 15 years old and he is a 10th grade student among the top of his class. Mohammad Bilal is also one of the few disabled students among the 40 students of his class. As an infant he was prescribed the wrong medication leaving him without the use of his legs. Despite this, he persists like his other peers and does not feel disabled inside when pursuing arts, education or sport activities.



Tofan Sultanzai

Tofan Sultanzai's hometown is Kabul, and he lives in the Qalea Hashmat Khan district. He is a student of Skateistan and is interested in skateboarding and football. His ambition is to be among the top ranks of Skateistan skaters.



Noorzai Ibrahimi

Noorzai Ibrahimi's hometown is the Nejrab district of the Kapisa province in Afghanistan. He was born in 1374 and now lives in the Dehmazang district of Kabul. His favorite sports are skateboarding and football and he's currently working with Skateistan as a skateboard instructor.



Khalid Sarwar

Khalid Sarwar has been a volunteer skate instructor since August 2010. He lived for 14 years in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He has been skating for 7 years and is interested in other extreme sports. Khalid is currently enrolled in the military training program with the Afghan National Army. He is dedicated to helping his home country and believes Skateistan is helping Afghanistan work towards a brighter future so Khalid will be supporting it for years to come.



Jake Simkin and Benafsha Tasmim, Skateistan Staff

Jake has been working with Skateistan for over two years as a photographer, skate and educational teacher. His hope is to see his students become young leaders of their communities and represent Afghanistan as young ambassadors.

Benafsha Tasmim, 23, studied Psychology and Education and currently works as the Education Co-ordinator for Skateistan. She was the first female climber on Skateistan's climbing wall and would like to learn boxing.



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INTRODUCTION

by the Editorial Team



The Skateistan facility officially opened on October 29, 2009, and is one of the few co-educational sporting NGOs in Afghanistan that work with impoverished and streetworking children. As both an athletic centre and an educational space, Skateistan aims to provide new skills to youth so that they gain confidence in their abilities as athletes and young leaders.



In the Skateistan classrooms students learn: drawing, calligraphy, theatre, painting, storytelling, quran study, photography, design and more. The main sport at Skateistan is skateboarding, and there is also a new climbing wall.



Skateistan aims to build tolerance and equality, firstly by providing educational and recreational opportunities to both girls and boys. Furthermore, it brings together a broad cross-section of Afghans, establishing a youth community from various ethnicities, education levels and socio-economic backgrounds



Skateistan's Youth, Arts, Peace! (YAP!) Exhibition

This is now officially the International Year of Youth, and for youth in Afghanistan this focus and encouragement could not be more appropriate. The participation of youth, particularly through dialogue on issues that affect them, is a rare opportunity in any country. In Afghanistan exclusion is worsened by gender inequality, lack of educational opportunities and ethnic divisions.

Over eight weeks of classes Skateistan's students (ages 5-19) pursued a series of creative workshops, which used the arts to encourage them to share and develop their ideas about peace and development in Afghanistan. Skateistan's 330 current students took part in a number of workshops each, such as painting, theatre, photography, illustration, writing, and music. Each of these offered new skills that could be used to interpret problems and exchange ideas on solutions for the future.

On February 6, 2011, there was an exhibition of the artwork, efforts and unique perspectives of Skateistan's students.

The workshop projects were designed to ensure that all students, literate or illiterate, could take meaningful part in the activities. The result is that almost all artwork created can be widely shared throughout Afghanistan, with the messages conveyed through abundant imagery.

The best art from YAP! workshops is featured in this magazine. Both the workshops and the exhibition were funded by UNAMA.

photos taken by the students

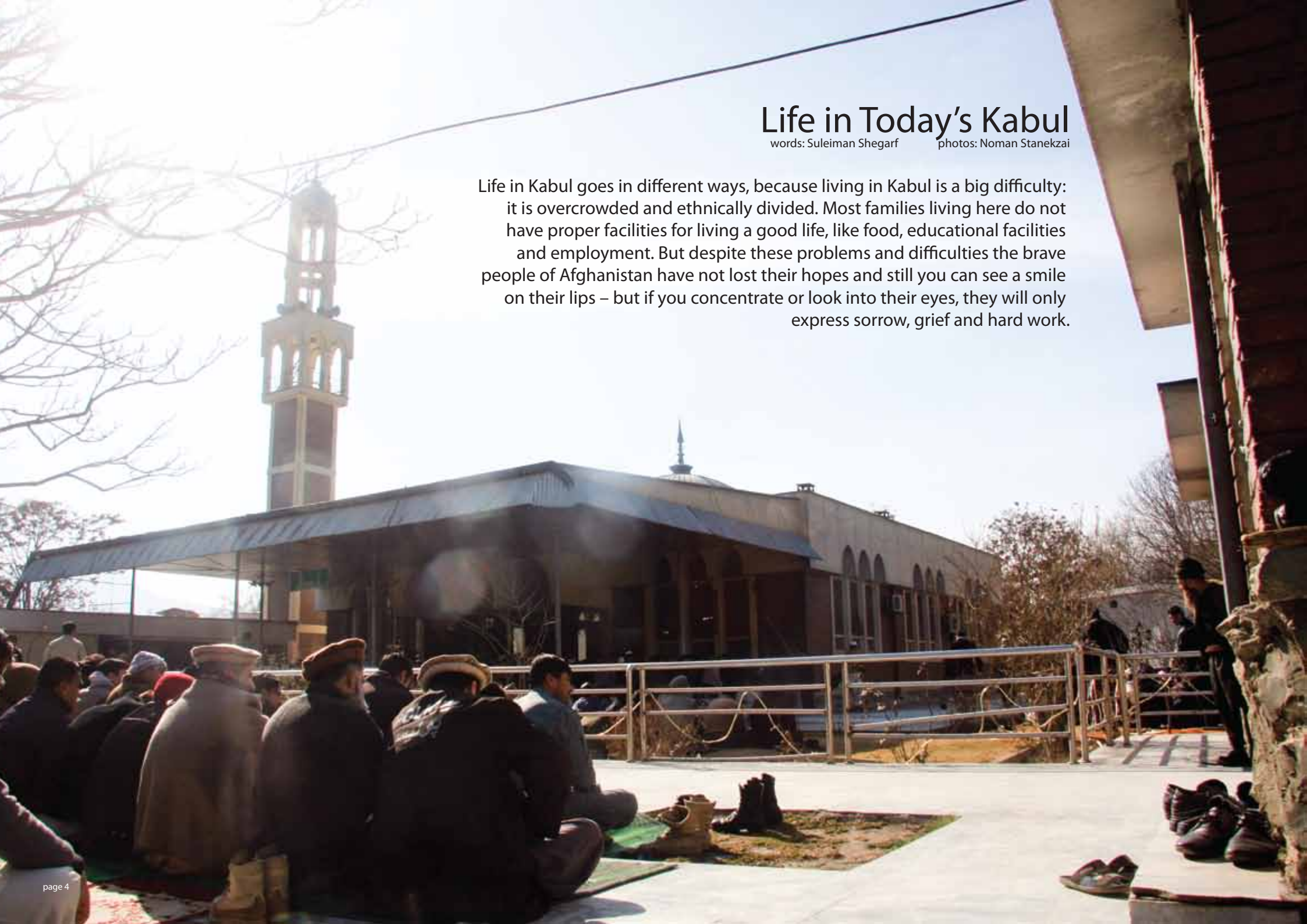


Life in Today's Kabul

words: Suleiman Shegarf

photos: Noman Stanekzai

Life in Kabul goes in different ways, because living in Kabul is a big difficulty: it is overcrowded and ethnically divided. Most families living here do not have proper facilities for living a good life, like food, educational facilities and employment. But despite these problems and difficulties the brave people of Afghanistan have not lost their hopes and still you can see a smile on their lips – but if you concentrate or look into their eyes, they will only express sorrow, grief and hard work.



Slowly developments are happening in Kabul, but still a lot of the roads need to be repaired and the environment needs improvement. One day the Kabul river will flow beautifully with clean water instead of being polluted by rubbish. It takes more than the government to make Kabul beautiful again. It needs unity between people and community action to take place.



Skateboard sculptures

Using the old and broken skateboards accumulated by Skateistan as the canvasses, the skateboard painting workshops took place with both girls and boys classes. Girls were asked to brainstorm a sculpture they could create with pieces of broken boards, and they decided on a butterfly. They then did sketches and decided what size and number of pieces would be needed to make the sculpture. Painting was done by several girls working together to paint one wing. The boys' classes followed a design for making a small chair from old skateboards, painting each of the six pieces in groups. This project encouraged to work closely with each other and practice painting, which many were doing for the first time.



Puppetry

Drawing on some of the storytelling skills learned in the Skateistan theatre workshops, some of the classes for younger boys and girls at Skateistan went on to pursue puppetry. Each class was split into small groups, which chose a storyline and characters for their puppet shows. The instructors then demonstrated how to make a simple puppet, such as choosing the materials, sewing the puppet, stuffing and decorating it. The students became really excited to replicate the process themselves. After each student finished making their puppet, backdrops were created and the shows were performed and filmed.



HEART OF KABUL

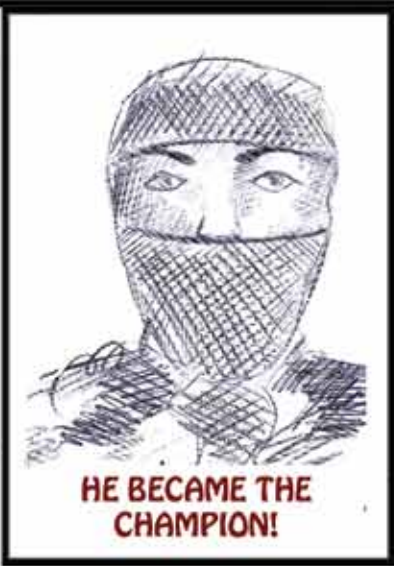


Heart of Kabul – Student Photography
By Ahmad Noman Stanekzai and Mohammed Naveed

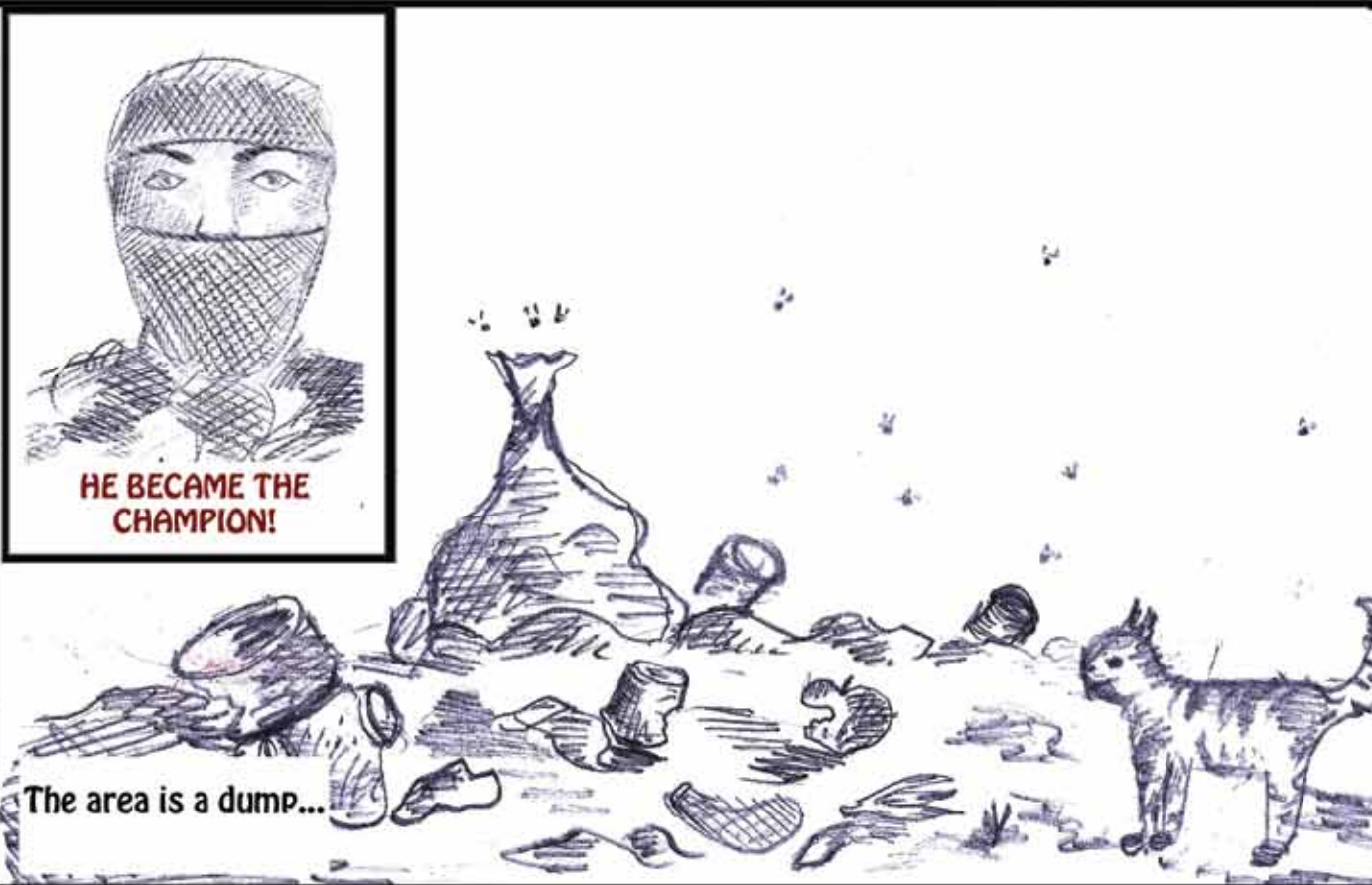
The photos in the series "Heart of Kabul" were taken by two Skateistan students: Ahmad Noman Stanekzai, 15, and Mohammed Naveed, 16. The street photography was taken as part of their classroom studies at Skateistan in photojournalism, on the themes of environmental health and life in Kabul. Noman and Naveed skateboarded through the streets with their Skateistan instructor, Jake Simkin, photographing different aspects of life and the people who work in central Kabul.



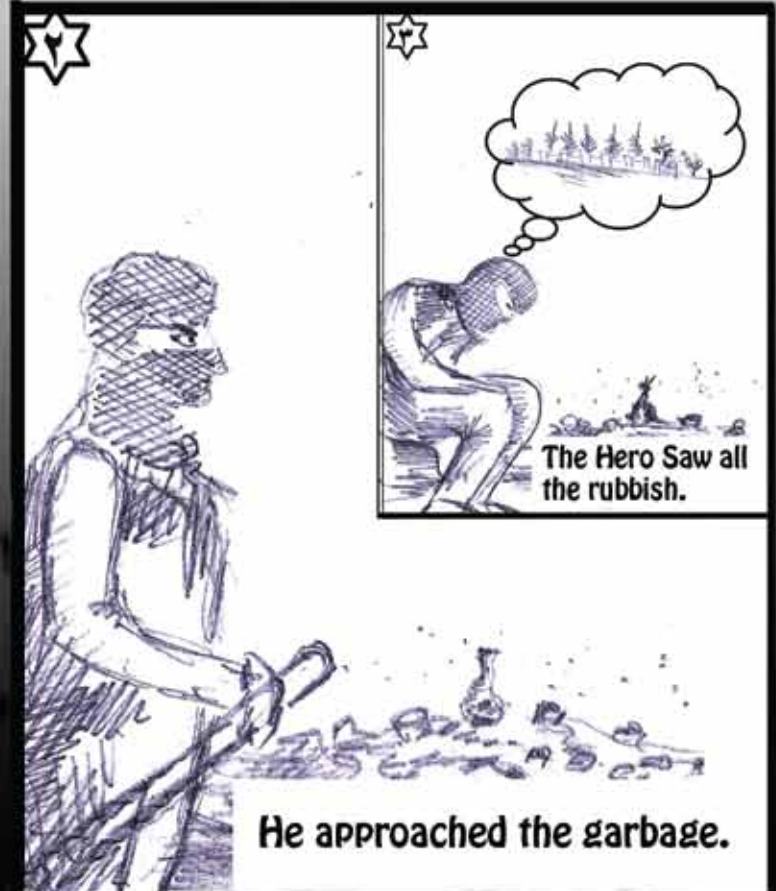




HE BECAME THE
CHAMPION!



The area is a dump...



The Hero Saw all
the rubbish.

He approached the garbage.



He went to the village to tell the
people what was happening.



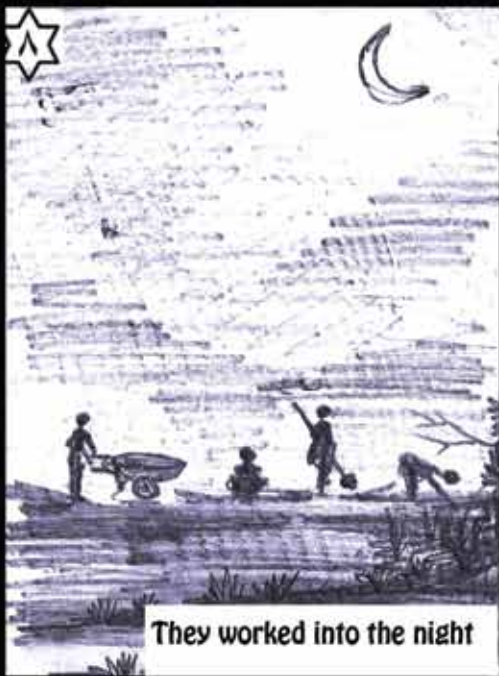
The village gathered to
listen to the champion.



He brought the people to the dump.



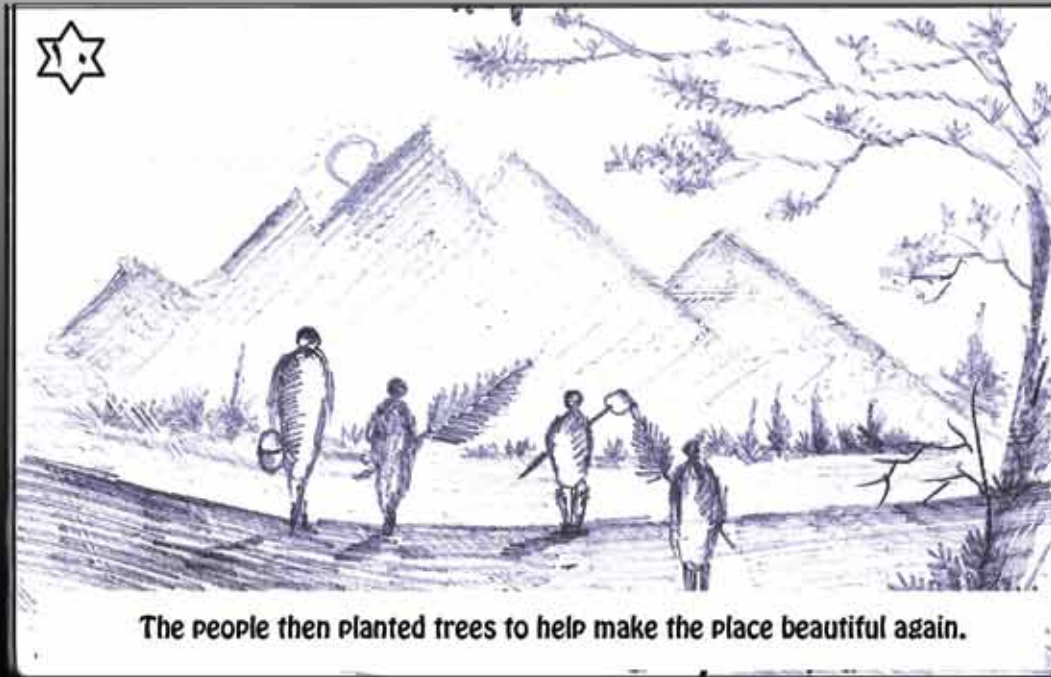
All the people worked together
to clean up the dump.



They worked into the night



The next day...



The people then planted trees to help make the place beautiful again.



The people were happy with their work



After a few years the dump became a beautiful place.

IDEAL KABUL

This photography workshop took place with all classes at Skateistan, young and old, boys and girls. Instructors first introduced digital cameras to students and went over some basic photography instruction and tips. Students then chose an area nearby for a photo fieldtrip, such as Ghazi stadium, Kabul river or Nader Khan Hill. Each student selected one of their own photos for printing. Laminated photos were given to them in the next class, on which they drew their "Ideal Kabul", showing what a more peaceful, beautiful environment would look like for them.



Reshad



Maneja



Faridah



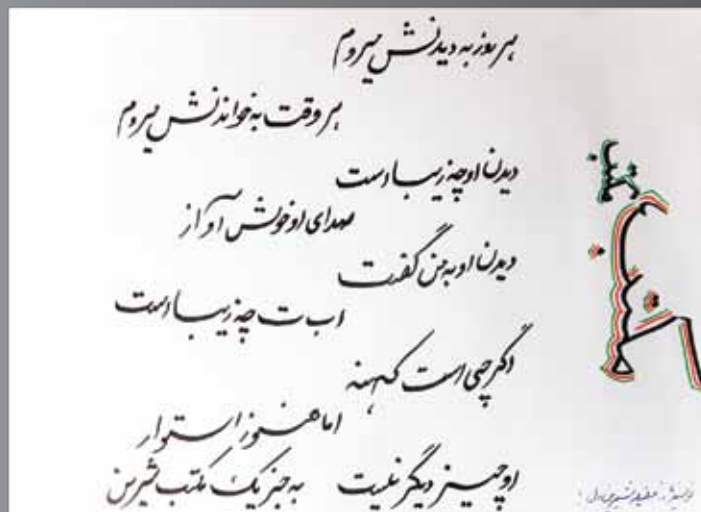
Ahmad Noman Stanekzai



Hamed Razi

Poems/Illustration

In recognition of the region's strong poetic history, such as Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207-1273), Skateistan's older students, both male and female, took part in poetry workshops, where they discussed famous poets, different poetic techniques and then wrote about the themes of peace and education. The workshops also involved an illustration component pairing illiterate students with poem writers so that each poem also had an accompanying image. Some classes also received training in calligraphy for writing out their poems.



Poem by Fazila

Calligraphy by Suleiman

School

Am always going to see him
Am always going to read him
How it is beautiful to see him
What a good voice
His seeing told me
A B C D how beautiful
It's very old
But still strong
He is nothing else
Just a sweet school

Poem by Fazila

Peace

Peace is our motto
Friendship is our work
We are school students
We should study in peace
Our future will be bright
If we get education
If peace not be in our country
The schools will be closed
At the end, death to war
Long live peace

Book

Book is our best friend
A friend will never leave us alone
Book is so beautiful
Be careful while changing the page
I am a reader of a book
Book is always in my shower
Suleiman Layeq says read book
Because this is a gift from god

Poem by Mohammad Suleiman Layeq.

Freedom

We are friends of freedom
We are Divine Mercy
We are one soul and one body
We are here to serve our country
We are guards of peace
We are friends of freedom

Cleaning is a part of faith
Hasanek is a dirty boy

Hasanak is getting up in the morning

Hasanak is a lazy boy

Has left all his bad works

Short nails, short hair

Cleaning

Ah, Ah, Ah

Ah, Ah, Ah

But now Hasanak

Wah, wah, wah

Wah, wah, wah

and we have to do it
long nails, long hairs and yellow teeth

Hasanak is not going to school in the morning

Hasanak is a dirty boy

now he goes to the bathroom

white teeth, short sleep

Mother

Mother is a God-given gift
Please serve your mother as much as you can
If you want God to bless you.
If you don't serve your mother your place will be in hell.
Ahmad says that
Heaven is under the feet of your mother.

School of Kabul

Let's go in
This is the school of Kabul
Let's study hard
Let's be strict
Learn the right speeches
From our books
The books of school
Will teach us a lot
Always come to school
Stand up, don't exclude others
Let's go in
Say hello to the teachers
Let's study
Fresh subjects
To make our teacher happy
Be polite and study hard



Mural Painting

Mural painting was one of the last workshops to take place, and students drew on themes and topics identified in their previous workshops.

Key words were identified and students learned how to write them in Dari with calligraphy pens or how to write them in English. Relevant imagery was also brainstormed so that the message of the mural could be conveyed to literate and illiterate viewers alike. After working on a sketch together, the class then spent 2-3 hours painting the final mural on plywood.



Tuesday Afternoon Girls Class



Monday Afternoon Boys Class



Monday Morning Boys Class



Interview with a Local Teacher

Azim Khamush is a very famous teacher in Kabul. In one class he may have 500 students he is coaching to sit university entrance exams.

Q: How do you suggest teaching students in a better way. And how do you deal with their problems?

A: First, he must be well educated in the field he teaches. He must understand the psychology of students, understand their problems and find various ways to solve their problems and lead them to success.

Q: Do you think there should be changes to the education curriculum?

A: I think, develop a new model for a curriculum, test it out, and build on it and change it as necessary.

Q: What is the better way to show students their mistakes? And should teachers motivate students with sticks or carrots?

A: If a teacher is fully educated he doesn't need to be a dictator and he finds other, better ways to show he has the control in the classroom. He is neither too strict nor too soft with the students. If a teacher is not fully educated and doesn't have experience then he just uses sticks. A teacher should give the student positive advice and show them their way – make them understand their responsibilities and help mould their personalities.

Q: What is your message for students? And for those teachers who scare students? What about those who don't respect their teachers?

A: First the students must understand that in our country, after decades of war, there needs to be education in order to rebuild it. Achieving knowledge and education is not possible without a leader or teacher which is why you must respect him. If you don't observe this then you won't be successful. The teacher and the student must know they exist side by side. One cannot exist without the other. Education itself is not the only important thing. There are other points they must observe. If a teacher insults the students, it's an insult to the name of teachers. The success of students is the success of the teacher. Failure of students is failure of the teacher. So the teacher must be kind, open minded and with kindness lead the students.



Interview by Shabana Mohd. Asif

Mariam's 10 tips for living well

- 1) Keep honesty as your habit.
- 2) Learning to save money is a good habit.
- 3) Accept that all difficulties are a lesson for you.
- 4) Treat people nicely so they will be nice back. Respect to be respected.
- 5) Celebrate the smallest good things that happen in your life.
- 6) Instead of saying 'I wish', say 'Inshallah'.
- 7) All the prizes and all the honours you get, share with your family.
- 8) You won't achieve everything so don't be too hard on yourself.
- 9) Remember all the important days in your life.
- 10) For each gift you receive, whether it is small or priceless, just be grateful.

Extra Tip of the Day

11) In marriage you need two things: a good partner but you must also be good yourself.

Fazila's Speech at the Civil Rights Forum in Kabul

Fazila Shirindel, a Skateistan student, spoke at a human rights forum in front of delegates from all over Afghanistan about the importance of not forgetting that children are the future of the nation.



By the name of almighty Allah,
I want to say salaam to all respectful guests.

My name is Fazila, and I'm fourteen years old. It's been about three years that I've been doing skateboarding. As a young girl I ask from government that they provide for us more organizations like the Skateistan school and sport parks so that we can have a good and bright future.

Also, every young girl and boy likes to be educated so I request from families to let their children go to school, so that they can serve their country and people. I hope to have a bright future like the children in rich countries, although we don't have the facilities here, but I try a lot.

I'm an Afghan girl and I am proud to be an Afghan.

All Afghan girls and boys have different dreams so I pray to Allah that all their dreams come true.

I request all young people to think about their country, how it can develop and be peaceful.

And I request to you elders to pay attention to the children.
Thank you for coming here.

GIRLS' JOURNALISM CLASS

Skateboarding for Afghan girls

Written by Mariam Stanekzai

Photos by Fazila Shirindel

In typical Afghan society, most of the people follow customs and traditions, which contain some rules for women and their behaviour. For a very long time, women have had to live with accepting some of the unfair rules, which are created by some dark-minded people to keep women from progressing. Islam teaches equality between men and women yet cultural rules differ from what is taught in the Quran. Generally sport is not something that's common for girls, and most families don't permit their daughters and female family members to take part in any kind of sport activities.

Fortunately, after years of war, a big revolution is starting in women's rights. A good example of this is girls coming to learn skateboarding in Skateistan. Approximately 110 girls from age 5 to 18 are learning skateboarding at Skateistan with the permission of their families.

Skateboarding in Afghanistan has no history and it's a very new sport for everyone. It is very touching to see girls skating in the park, facing their fears and persisting. They are enjoying skating and love it a lot. When these girls enter the skatepark they feel that they are entering a new world; a world of fun, which is completely different from their ordinary and daily lives.

The problem of Afghan girl skaters is that they are not free to skate everywhere because they face a different reaction from the people. The Skateistan park is a place for girls where they can be very comfortable and can feel free to do anything in the privacy of the facility.

Some of girls who work on the streets and beg are also a part of Skateistan. They are such innocent and simple girls who have been witnesses of the worst days of war, and for most of them it's first time that they find somewhere for fun and to live for themselves.





A Story of a Woman

This is the true story of a woman who gave birth to a daughter. Her story is like this: *"I am a woman who has had two sons and two daughters and my husband became very angry towards me whenever I gave birth to daughters. I had a third daughter and during the pregnancy he told me if it was a daughter then I must abandon her. I called my husband to say that it was a girl, but I lied and said that she had died. My husband told me to leave the child at the hospital and come home."*

The poor woman gave her child to one of the nurses at the hospital and left to go home. She gave away a child who she had kept for nine months in her womb. Due to her husband's behaviour, she abandoned the child at the hospital. This man who doesn't like to have daughters, he has obviously forgotten that he was born from a woman and without her he wouldn't be alive.

Ways of overcoming violence

- Following the rules of Allah so that we do not have displaced shame.
- Thinking about how our actions affect society.
- Understanding our responsibilities.
- Being careful that no one is emotional or physically hurt from our behaviour.
- Incorporating justice into our lives.
- Being aware of our rights.
- Giving importance to education and teaching children how to act with respect.
- Creating programs for radio and television about ways to overcome violence.

Current examples of violence against women in Afghan society

- Degrading comments towards women.
- Insults and humiliation of women by men in their family.
- Forbidding women access to health services.
- The physical power of men being used against women.
- Men having several wives.
- Girls being forbidden to get an education.
- Women being physically abused.
- Women being murdered.
- Girls being married off before a mature age.

Violence is a negative action that hurts the human body and/or mind.

There have several kinds of violence:

1. Physical violence
2. Sexual violence
3. Political violence
4. Psychosocial violence
5. Verbal violence
6. Social violence



A Message to Disabled Youth



My name is Mohammad Bilal “Mir Bat Zai”. My father name is Mohammad Dawod and I am from Khost. I was born in Pakistan and I am 15 years old. I am disabled because when I was one year old I got an injection that ended up disabling the use of both legs.

Now I live in Afghanistan in Kabul. We were refugees who went to Pakistan and when the Taliban skipped from Kabul we came there. And now I am in ninth grade in school. I have also finished an English course and I know computers very well. I get a lot of certificates from different courses and also I study computers in AOAD embassy (Accessibility Organization for Afghan Disabled) and also in CCD (Community Centre for the Disabled). I also learned photography from a German woman who came to Kabul and taught how to take pictures. I have a certificate.

My father is a driver. I have two brothers and five sisters and we are ten people in the family. In the future I want to become a good doctor to help the people. I can also ride a bicycle and I have an interest in sports. My best sports are cricket, basketball, skating, etc. I can speak four languages: Pashto, Dari, English and a little Urdu. I have the second position in school among 50 students. I haven't any money to get English or Computer classes but I have very much interest.

At first I didn't have any hope for my life because I thought “I can't study, I can't work, I can't do sports and I can't play with the other children.” But when I became big and saw other disabled boys and saw the community for the disabled, and sports for the disabled, I found hope that disabled people also can work, can do sport, can play and everything else. I have a message to the disabled that they shouldn't get unhappy about life because they have a future and can do everything, but only if they try.

I really like skating and in the future I want to become a good skateboarder, I enjoy very much going skating.

Music

Taken on over several weeks during Skateistan's art class, the music workshop was the only UNAMA workshop that had girls and boys taking part together. Students chose to write a song about Afghan pride, peace and unity, which is noteworthy considering the many ethnic and social divisions within the country. They came up with lyrics for a song, made a tune, memorized it and practiced singing. At first the students didn't believe they were able to sing, but by the end they were singing proudly on their own. Two older students also took part, choreographing the singers and gathering all the footage for the a music video to accompany the song.

Lyrics of "Peace is our Motto"

We are the messengers of Peace
We are the messengers of Peace
Our feelings are the flowers that we share with you
Our Peace shines brightly

We will make smiles bloom upon your lips
... upon your lips.

Both your days and nights be filled with happiness.
... filled with happiness
We're the kids of this homeland.
Peace is our motto
Peace is our motto.

We are the Forefather's future
We are the hope of our country
We are the new teachers of our homeland
Peace and Friendship is our motto
Peace and Friendship is our motto

We are serving our country
We love our country
We love our country
Long live Afghanistan.



Theatre

Because of the ability of children with all education backgrounds to participate equally in performance, Skateistan has found theatre to be an effective way for the students to share ideas and engage with each other. In the theatre workshop Skateistan students worked in groups to create their own plays based on stories written by the students themselves. Students discussed development, peace and the various issues they felt are facing Afghanistan, including: opium addiction and poverty, child marriage, education for girls, sports opportunities for girls, and the social impacts of war. They then created a plotline, characters, props and backdrops. The plays were rehearsed and finally documented by the students themselves onto video.



MY COUNTRY, MY AFGHANISTAN

Directed by Ahmad Noman Stanekzai



Afghanistan is filled with minerals, culture and heritage but slowly everyone takes a piece of it. Without all these things Afghanistan cannot stand on its feet.

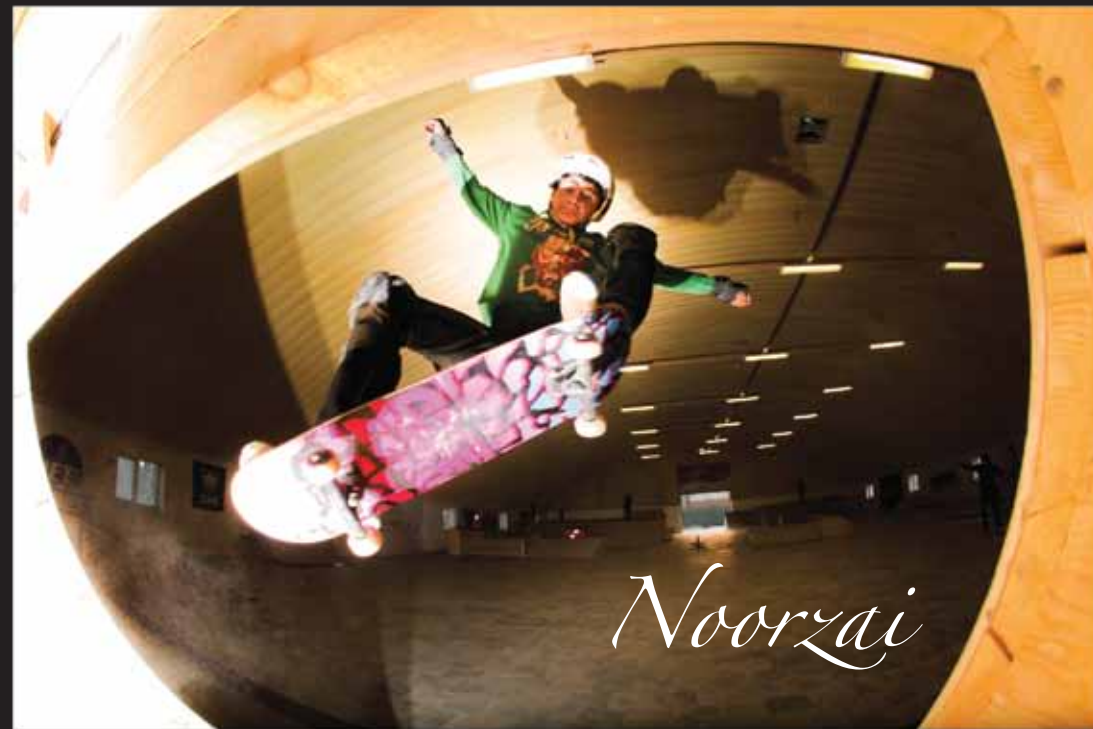
UNITY

Directed by Tofan



Unity is a play about a father whose dying wish is to gather his sons that have been arguing with each other, and ask them to break a bundle of sticks. In the end it is shown that a bundle of sticks together cannot be broken but a stick on its own can be easily broken.

Fazila

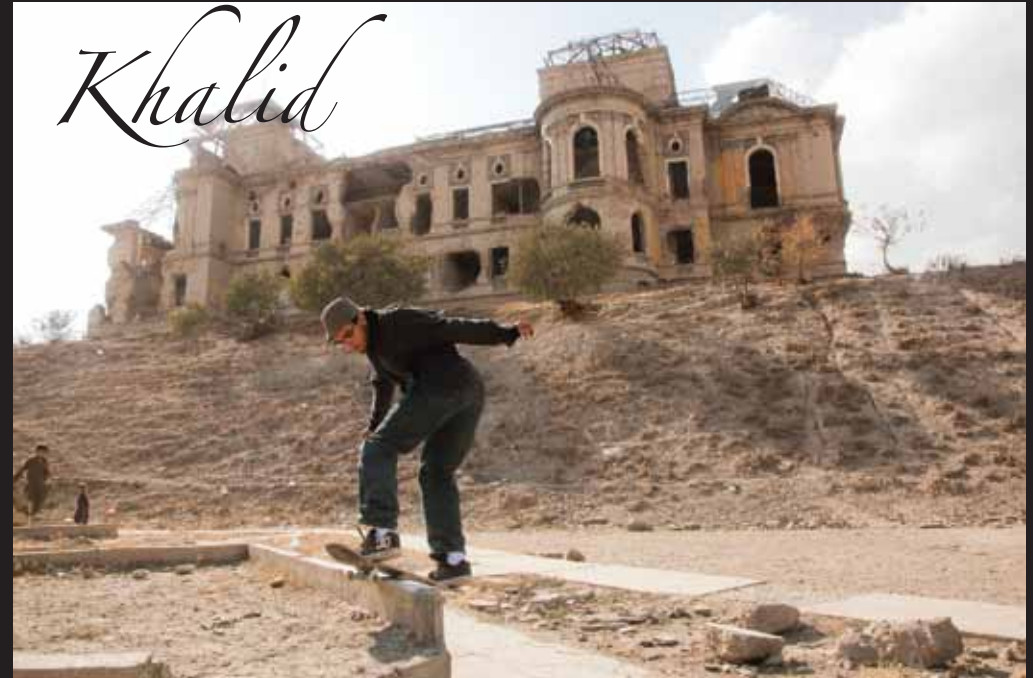


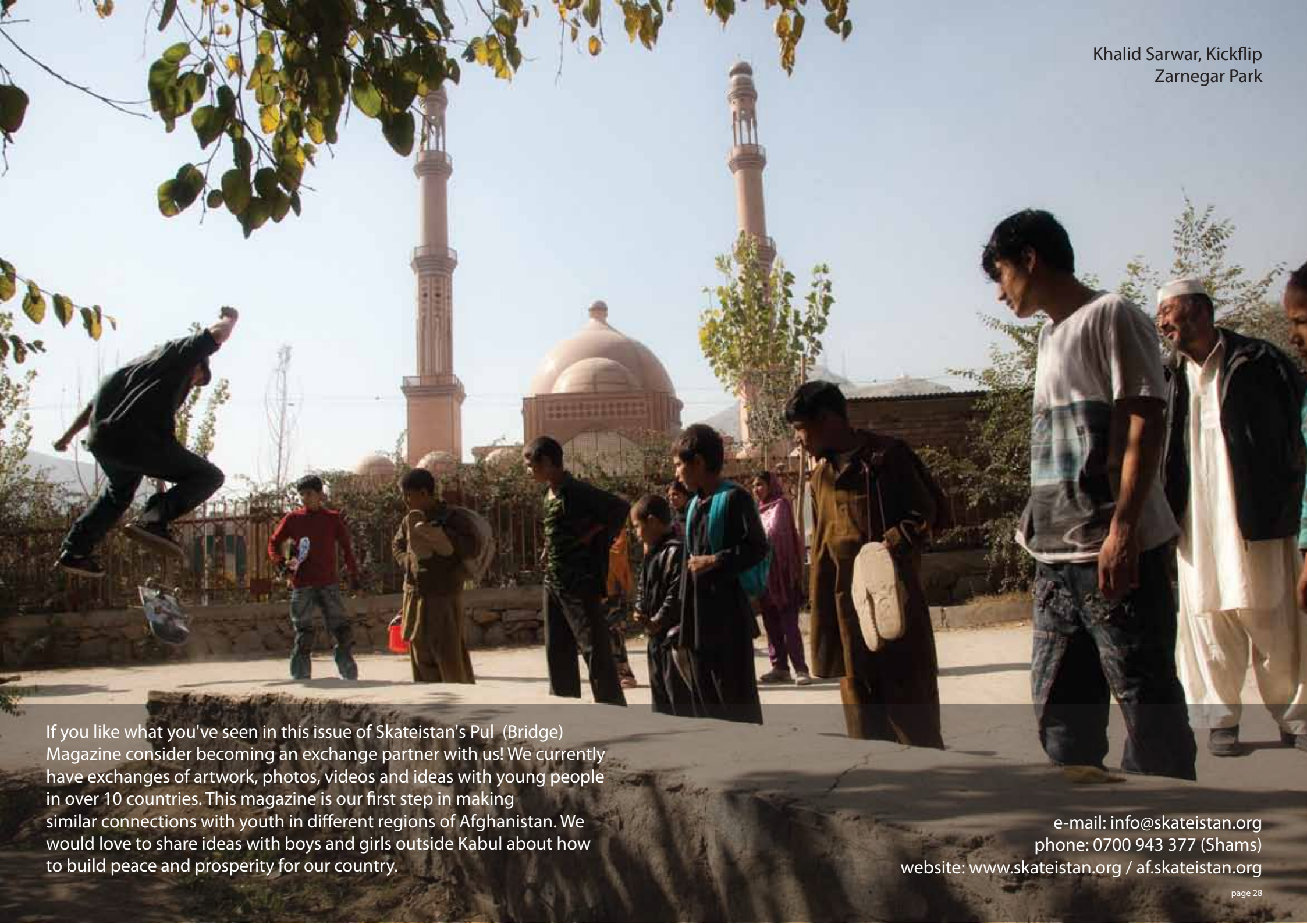
Noorzai

Merza



SKATE PHOTOS





If you like what you've seen in this issue of Skateistan's Pul (Bridge) Magazine consider becoming an exchange partner with us! We currently have exchanges of artwork, photos, videos and ideas with young people in over 10 countries. This magazine is our first step in making similar connections with youth in different regions of Afghanistan. We would love to share ideas with boys and girls outside Kabul about how to build peace and prosperity for our country.

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Printing sponsored by UNAMA

