



THE 'SMALL WORLD' PROJECT 2010



SKATEISTAN OVERVIEW

The idea of Skateistan began in 2007 when two Australians arrived in Kabul, Afghanistan, with three skateboards and quickly met a group of local boys and girls eager to learn how to skate. What began as informal skateboarding lessons at a local empty fountain turned into something much bigger. Skateistan took shape in the following years, with the help of international donors and skate industry partners. In October 2009, the 1750m² Skateistan park officially opened, giving 270 boys and girls (ages 5-17) in Kabul a secure environment and an indoor skatepark to come to every week.

Skateistan is Afghanistan's first skateboarding school, with separate teaching days for male and female students, as well as classes for the disabled. It's also one of very few recreational spaces for girls and young women in Kabul. The organization provides on-site loans of skateboarding equipment, shoes and safety gear. Skate instruction is given by experienced international skateboarders as well as some of the very first kids to step on a skateboard in Afghanistan, who now work with Skateistan as skate instructors.

THE CLASSROOM

Aside from skate lessons there are also classrooms where students explore a range of subjects. Skateboarding has been key in bringing together Afghan youth of all ethnicities, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and the interaction is further built upon through classroom projects and discussion. The students themselves decide what they want to learn, while Skateistan provides them with the resources and support they need to develop skills and tell their own stories.

Each week at Skateistan there are 18 separate classes that spend an hour in the skatepark and an hour in the classroom. There are regular boys and girls classes that study a variety of lessons, as well as a girls' journalism class, a disabled class, advanced art classes, and classes to help students that do not attend public school catch up on the materials required to register. Topics explored in Skateistan's most recent semester included writing and penmanship, and the various aspects of environmental





health such as water pollution, deforestation, and hygiene. Lessons include hands-on activities, art projects, games, photography and discussions that encourage students to think about their world and how to create positive change within it.



info@skateistan.org
<http://skateistan.org>



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As a part of telling their stories, Skateistan students and staff would like to connect their classrooms with other youth around the world using a variety of multimedia tools. We are looking for partner classrooms that can correspond with Skateistan students on a weekly or bi-weekly basis during our next semester (beginning mid-August). The exchanges could include e-mail, photos, video, blogging, or video conferencing. The aim of the project is to enable self expression and cross-cultural understanding using art and technology as the tools.

We are looking to partner Skateistan's female students with other girls aged 5-12 and 13-17, as well as our male students with other boys aged 5-12 and 13-17. We're also very interested in connecting with groups of young female and male skateboarders. If you are interested in connecting your classroom or youth group with a Skateistan classroom, please send an email to erika@skateistan.org with a brief description of your class or youth group, what sort of projects you are interested in pursuing through an exchange, and why you think your group would be a good fit for connecting with the students of Skateistan.

Contact Skateistan:

Erika Kinast (English)
Education Coordinator
erika@skateistan.org
M: +93 (0) 789 764 088

Rhianon Bader (English)
Media and Communications
rhianon@skateistan.org
M: +93 (0) 784 492 681

