

Transcript of Dari dialogue, Sayara Election Theater Segment

1. Introduction by Foundation for Culture & Civil Society Co-Director

A group of Afghan artists led by Qadir Farokh began its work on this project three months ago with 16 teams, of which 9 consisted of young men and women and the rest were composed of professionals from Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Jalalabad, Herat und Mazar-e-Sharif provinces, all working to launch a publicity campaign about the election. More than 696 shows of the play they developed were held in 25 provinces with a total audience of 610,000 people.

Funded by Asia Foundation and executed by SAYARA, the project included also posters, audio cassettes (about 2000), etc. distributed in public areas throughout the country.

Today this is the last show prepared on the occasion of the night before our elections.

I thank you for your participation and would like to express my special thanks to those who have traveled to remote areas to make this project a success.

2. A summary transcription of the play's content

Scene 1:

A man comes home together with his son bringing good news to his wife about the forthcoming elections for Parliament, to be followed by presidential elections. She welcomes the event and insists on her participation and the role of women as a whole in the elections. Ironically, she stresses that it is the men who destroyed this land; therefore, they should give way to women to rule, to build roads, to help the poor.

Scene 2:

The artist Mr. Mowlodin boasts that he deserves to be elected as president as he considers himself a competent and renowned candidate in his area and expects that many will vote for him if he would run in the elections.

Other actors tease him as if it were only a dream and laugh at him...

He in turn says that he will spend for them extravagantly if elected... with smiles on his lips.

Scene 3:

A public awareness group arrives and is welcomed with a performance of Afghan national dance by the players.

Scene 4:

The village chief addresses the audience. He explains the reason about the gathering, introducing the head of public awareness team coming from the same village, which has the duty to provide information about the forthcoming elections and to reply to questions from their audiences.

Scene 5:

The publicist addresses the audience using a loudspeaker.

Some raise questions about the house of parliament, the National Assembly, and he replies that this is a chamber of people's representatives who represent the whole nation and decide on national issues.

The publicist explains the necessity for the elections, stressing the participation of all people in this process to elect a state of their own.

He replies to questions raised by the audience, shedding light on the requirements and eligibility for casting votes at the polling stations.

He explains the procedure, methods and authenticity of votes and ballot boxes.

Scene 6:

An audience member asks who the candidates are and which criteria need to be met to declare a candidature.

The publicist refers to the village chief to prepare a list of the candidates.... The village chief nods and expresses his preparedness and assures the audience members every support.

The village imam at the podium gives details in reply to the question regarding the criteria for a candidature: the candidate must be an Afghan, Moslem, educated, i.e. able to read and write, must have not harmed the people but on the contrary be aware of the problems and needs of the people and nation .. one who has served his homeland for peace... who respects the rights of all national minorities and stands for peace and tranquility ...

Scene 7:

The head of the public awareness team explains about the number of representatives from a province: the number of representatives each province sends to the National Assembly is proportionately determined by the number of the population of the given province...

One of the audience members replies: "If is so, we would like to nominate teacher Sharif Khan as our candidate..."

The village chief talks about teacher Sharif and confirms him as a qualified candidate, who has always been helpful to the village dwellers, and prays to God for him to be successful.

The teacher thanks the people but excuses himself that on account of workload in school he would not be able to assume this responsibility.

Scene 8:

Another person, Haibat Khan, wants to bring himself as a candidate...

Haibat Khan claims to be the best candidate from the village.

Others argue that the teacher is the best candidate...

He contests with excitement, "I have always been helpful to you, and am I not young and good-looking, what is wrong with me that you elect another person?"

Others say no, we need a person who builds us a school so that our children can learn how to read and write.

The actor confirms, "this guy has taken him once with his car to the city, but the teacher does not even have a cart to carry his stuff..."

The contester says, "I have cars, huge area of land and many houses... At the moment you are my peasants. In fact, I need nothing... You, including the teacher will starve If I don't help you., the thieves will loot you... so don't be dissatisfied with me..."

The man with the drum says, "We don't need you, thanks be to god that we have our national police with us to ensure our security, we have the court to ensure justice. The reason why we opted for teacher Sharif is that he, for example, suffers sleepless nights in order to help peasants during irrigation period."

Haibat Khan says his final words, "I will allow nobody to stand against me, I have nominated myself and I must be elected."

The publicist tries to cool him down, advising him to let people nominate their candidates first and following elections anyone who has won the most votes would be elected... but he does not agree... And says: "You are going to lure the people by your colorful posters and pictures, but it won't work. I can buy all the voting entitlement ID cards. What can you do against this?"

The publicist says no one has the right to buy the cards. The offender will be punished by law... Even if you did buy them, each person should personally come to cast his/her ballot, because everyone has only one vote.

This polemic continues until the end of the video.