

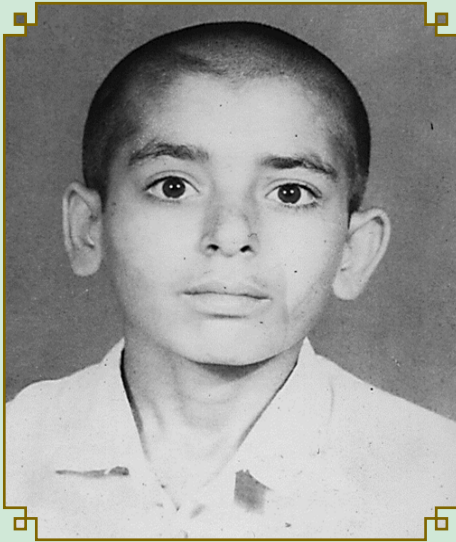
Table of Contents

ABDULHAKIM BAHAR	1	Bibliophiles the magazine for Ramin's reading children	44
Biography	2	Commemoration of the National Day of Children's Literature in the village of Ramin	45
Part I: Introduction	2	Houshang Moradi Kermani's birthday party in Ramin village.	45
Bahar in his own words	3	Annual reading contest in Ramin Library	46
Grandma's house	4	Supplying books for children in need of special care	46
Traces of non-educational books in the village	5	The media coverage of reading programs at Ramin	47
I brought the passion for reading to Ramin Elementary School	6	Book festival and celebration of reading clubs of Chabahar city in the bibliophile village of Ramin	47
Immigration to Chabahar	8	Ramin Library visited by students of Chabahar	49
Keyhan for Kids and Me	9	Ramin Library hosting writers and poets	49
The experience of Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults	11	Nowruz in Ramin Library	50
Start of Middle School	12	Running the first mobile library for Ramin and surrounding villages	51
Discovering Journey to Find Bookstores in Chabahar	13	The special space of Ramin Bibliophile Village at Tehran International Book Exhibition	51
The great bookstore of Shahid Beheshti Library	14	Becoming a member of Central Coordination Council for Bibliophile Villages	52
Buying books as a top task in the list	15	Ramin Library as a location for video documentary of reading programs	54
The Paternal Grandmother	16	Iftar ceremony of the members with Ali Asghar Seidabadi	54
Leaving School	20	Training classes for photography and movie making	55
The oppressed traveler of the sea and his book	20	The third round of Reading Clubs for Children and Adolescents	56
The beloved books of the sea	21	Ramin as host for the second book festival of Chabahar	56
Goodbye to sea voyages	22	Poets, writers and artists traveling Ramin	57
The wondering bookshelf	22	The Minister of Culture visiting Ramin	58
Yet another new season	24	Farhad Hassanzadeh's birthday	58
10 years of hosting children at home	27	Fourth Round of Reading Clubs: Ramin Workshops	59
Container Library	27	Media Attachments	60
Part II:	31		
Reading promotion programs and activities	31		
Ramin Reading Promotion Programs	32		
The program for launching reading network in Sistan and Baluchestan Province	32		
Design of special book baskets for fishing boats and ships	33		
Reading Clubs for Children and Adolescents	39		
The Objectives of Reading Clubs	40		
Inviting national and local storytellers	42		

ABDULHAKIM BAHAR

Biography

Part I: Introduction



Abdulhakim Bahar, the institutionalizing man
Mohammad Amin Mohammadi

Sometimes we think that important works require special conditions.

The prevalent order in contemporary societies make us think that economic capital, capable human resources equipped with higher and academic education, and benefiting from high knowledge and awareness, along with provision of ideal facilities, can help to achieve the desired result. But sometimes, contrary to popular belief, despite the lack of all these ideal facilities and special conditions some surprising events happen. Surprises that are sometimes seen in the field of culture and art.

The field of books and reading is a good example for this as reading is a cultural activity fed by many cultural resources. In this brief report we try to show the exemplar activities and achievements of Abdulhakim Bahar, whose creative and efforts with extremely limited financial resources in the field of reading promotion is yet another example introduced in different cities across the

country. He has started his task in his home-village in one of the most disadvantaged and far from the center rural district in Sistan and Baluchistan province at the very zero border point, just where the land meets that sea and indeed at the very border point that culture must mark its presence most fruitfully.

Hearing the moments of the enigmatic and mysterious life of this reading promoter in Chabahar made me to write a few notes on his achievements and to complete it through quoting his own words. To be like Abdulhakim Bahar is to be able to use scattered cultural, affective, and emotional energies to pass frontiers of normal social organizations to settle new institutions for the productive meeting of culture and society.

Bahar in his own words

Birth

I was born on February 21, 1974 on the slopes of a mountain not far from the Cave of Figs, in the village of Kijdap, 20 km east of Chabahar, and I spent my childhood there until I was 5 years old. Because of my father's fishing job, we moved to the village of Ramin when I was five years old.

Grandma's house



My maternal grandmother's house was still in the village of Kijdap where occasionally, we would go to see her. I loved the moments with Grandma. She kept a huge pile of old newspapers and magazines in which she sometimes wrapped medicine and herbs or packed her tobacco; she often flipped through them, looked at the printed pictures, and fabricated imaginative stories for me to listen. She narrated so many stories to me. I still wonder where did she get all

those newspapers and magazines. Possibly, the village teachers would send them to her after reading, or maybe she would ask the people who went to the city to bring these publications to her so that she could use them like this, or possibly... I don't know!

But I loved those moments of her reading and narration so much, and I always dreamed of going to see Grandma every day and having fun with her world of old, faded magazines.

In 1981, for the first time in my life, I saw and touched the first free and non-educational book ever.

I also cannot remember what happened that the village of Kijdap was renamed to Lipar...! The indigenous people themselves did not know what happened. It was only said that when a Gendarmerie Station was set up near the village, the name of the village was changed after the Station and then the children and many residents knew Kajdap Elementary School as Lipar School.

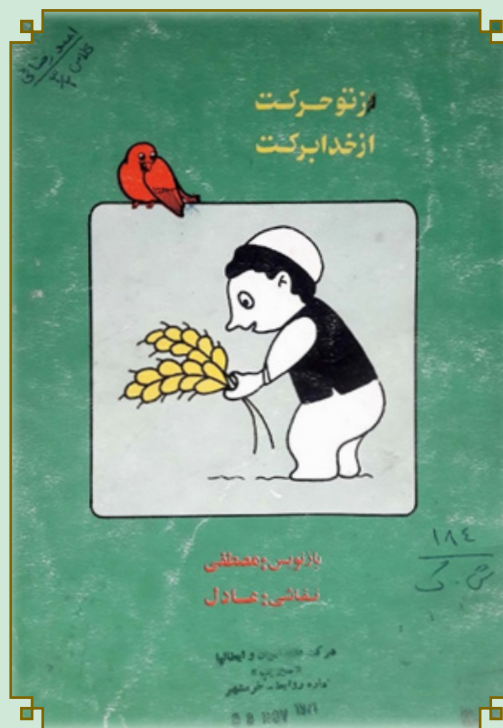
Traces of non-educational books in the village



In 1981, I was an 8 year-old boy in the second grade of elementary school when we went back to Grandma's house on Nowruz. Something new had happened in the village. One of the school rooms was turned into a small library. My friends borrowed the book from there and showed it to me. Dad Rahim, Esmail, Dad Karim, Abdul Sattar, Zahedeh, Abdul Samad, Gorag, Somayeh, Darbibi, Akbar, Chengo, Babol, Bakhshi, Dad Rahman and so many others!

The world of story books fascinated me. It was the first time I had seen a non-fiction book and I had flown in their sky. My wish was that I wish I was also a student of Kijdp Elementary School and I enjoyed reading the books in his library ...!

I brought the passion for reading to Ramin Elementary School



I shared the beauty and enthusiasm of the children of Kijadp Elementary School Library with Reza Hosseini and Akbar Pahlavani, teachers of Ramin village primary school in 1983, and asked them to set up a library for us at the school. As summer vacations was near, they promised to do

it in the next educational year.

The schools reopened on September 1984. Mr. Pahlavani was transferred to a school in Chabahar. Mr. Hosseini introduced Abdulhakim Khormak-Zehi to the first and second grade students instead of Mr. Pahlavani, and he himself became the teacher of the third, fourth and fifth grade children.

In composition class, contrary to the topic which was about the beginning of the school year, I wrote and read an essay about books and the world of stories.

My essay reminded Mr. Hosseini of what he and his friends had promised me at the end of last year!

In 1984, at the Shahid Najafi Primary School in Ramin, Rah Library distributed about 50 volumes of books among school children and young adult of the time to read and exchange with each other.

The students helped and cleaned and tidied up a room in the school that was used as a warehouse, prepared a special notebook, and designed it so that they could register the books and put their books in order.

A wave of enthusiasm prevailed among school children for reading and Mr. Hosseini nominated me to the children as the head of the library. This was a responsibility that gave me a great opportunity to read more books. During the break time, I was in the library for the students to lend books and receive the books they had read. On the last day of the week, Fridays, the school library was available to the children of the village

from 8 to 10 in the morning. This is how the children of the 1980s in the village of Ramin became acquainted with non-educational books. By the end of the school year, around 50 more volumes of books had been added to the library's books. It was Mr. Hosseini, the village teacher, who accepted the responsibility of purchasing and preparing the books. Perhaps, one of the reasons I still remember his name, is this very valuable service in those years.

Immigration to Chabahar

In 1985, the Fisheries Department employed my father and he had to go to Chabahar. Until April and May, because of my studies, he had to travel



between the village and the city every day. Sometimes, due to the lack of a vehicle, he stays at his friends' house in the city at night.

In the summer of 1985, for the first time, a heavy truck arrived and the villagers helped us to load our household luggage. My friends came to

our house to say goodbye. I saw the elders who had tears in their eyes, we had not left yet, but they felt sad and deserted.

In September 1985, my educational documents was transported to the city. That year, neither I was a student of Ramin School nor Mr. Hosseini was the village teacher. Mr. Khormak-Zehi was also transferred from the village to the school where I had just registered. Instead, Mr. Izadi was introduced as the new village teacher. During Nowruz 1986, when I went to the village, I saw no sign of the primary school library and its books. The children didn't even know what had happened to the books!

Until the fifth grade, I was a student of Shahid Dastan School that was located in a remote suburbs of the city and miles away from the city center. The final exams of the last year of elementary school forced me and my classmates to travel to the city center for the first time in my life.

We arranged to visit the Chabahar city market on the last day of the exams.

In those years, there was no news about the free market zone and the crowded area of the city. There were a few stalls with a few shops on either side of the city's main street. The city had no more than one or two streets that were crossed by a car or pedestrian occasionally, and in front of the city's only small hospital, there were old women sitting and selling food, tropical fruits, and herbal medicines.

Keyhan for Kids and Me

Seeing the only newsstand in the town with its sharp contrasts with other stalls and shops, had a huge impact on me. Standing there was so enjoyable as I forgot the passage of time and reality of the space. There were so many books and magazines, with so many images and words to read. I felt like swimming in a large and calm sea.

The affectionate eyes of the old man with moustaches in the newsstand,



drew me to touch the papers and magazines stacked side by side. For the first time I had seen Keyhan for Kids, a special magazine for kids, that was the only Iranian magazine for kids at that time. Keyhan for Kids provided a new world for me and it was such a great joy to read it beside the other works of fiction and non-educational books.

My experience summer of 1986 was tied with Keyhan for Kids, Fajr newspaper stall, Haj Seyyed Abdullah Khamoushi, and his two boys: Seyyed Baqer and Seyyed Javad. Every Tuesday evening, when I received a new issue from Keyhan for Kids, I felt a change in my life.

The experience of Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults

The calm beach of Chabahar port, in the hot weather of the south, specially graced the atmosphere for the children. Many of them would go there early in the morning to play and bathe in water. I was one of them. One day, as I was returning home from the sea, I came across the library of the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. It was such a calm, convenient and quiet library and I could ask any question I had form the person sitting at the desk.



It was Amir Heidari, the caretaker of the Center who introduced me to Mr. Amiri and Mrs. Salari. These two coaches kindly motivated and introduced me to enter this important cultural center. The Center was the third free world I could step into and I spent most of my summer days there.

For the first time, beside reading, I was trying my hand at writing stories as at the Center they were organizing a writing contest and I was working hard to prepare a work for the storytelling competition. After this, gradually I felt like writing about the things I found interesting.

Start of Middle School



I experienced the beginning of middle school in a quiet different way. Many of the things we did in elementary school were dropped out of educational curriculum of the middle school and was replaced by other activities. It was the first time I saw a separate teacher for each subject. Even sports and physical education and educational and cultural affairs had their special teacher.



It was a great chance that our middle school environment had a neat and tidy library with more books and was run by the children and under the supervision of a teacher. It was a library that largely

met the needs of children in their field of study and research. I was in the first grade of middle school when Mahmoud Arefnejad, a very devoted teacher, initiated me to the beautiful world of classic Persian literature. He was such a pleasant and kind teacher who came to school by bicycle. Whenever he came to class, after teaching time, he would introduce a new non-educational book, mostly in the field of literature to the children, that was written according to their age, and then, he stayed in the class to talk to children about the books to recite Golestan, Bustan, and Shahnameh for us.

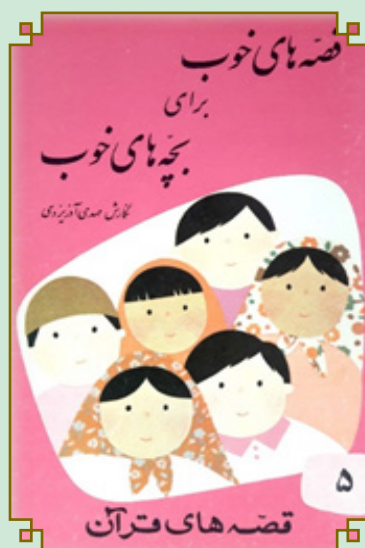
Discovering Journey to Find Bookstores in Chabahr

From June 1987, when the schools were closed for summer vacations, I started a journey across the city to find bookstores. The first place I found, was a store that was set up by the Islamic Development Organization and was known as Haji Mousavi's shop. It mostly sold stationeries, but sometimes books were seen there and a small number of those books were for children and teenagers. Most of the books did not appeal to me very much and I am sure they could not satisfy an audience like me.

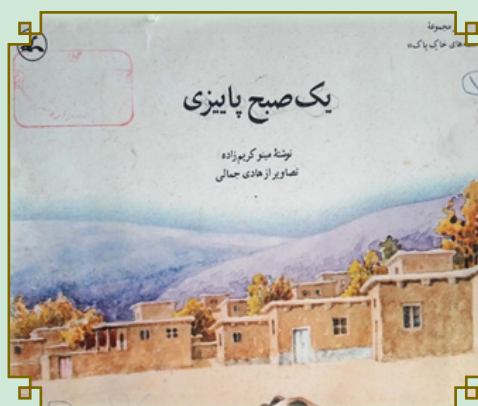


Molavi Abdulmajid Akhondeh's bookstore was the second bookstore in Chabahar that I found. It was a small stall next to the Mohammadi Mosque, mostly providing religious books, and occasionally other adults books in such fields as history, philosophy, social sciences, etc.

The great bookstore of Shahid Beheshti Library



The Shahid Beheshti Library was an almost better-equipped bookstore that had recently opened in the Fajr Bazaar, next to the Fruit and Vegetable Market, just below Mr. Khamoushi's press stall. It was a bookstore with audio and video equipments as well as advertising facilities that in those days could attract a good number of people as audiences and customers. All kinds of books could be found there. Good books, poor books, children's books, teen books, religious books, political and social sciences, history, etc.



Shahid Beheshti Library has proved to be the best bookstore in the history of Chabahar booksellers until today. Most of the books published at that time were presented in this bookstore, and if the book was not available at the store, it was ordered and provided by the bookstore, a service that was unprecedented and unique in those days.



The bookstore has indeed turned to be a public space for all the young readers of Chabahar. I remember a gentle young man who introduced himself as Mr. Heidarian who soon became friends with the children and read books in the neighborhoods of Chabahar. He helped to establish the libraries of the neighborhoods in a basic format. Together with friends as Faiz Mohammad Pishdast, Hassan Yadegarzadeh, Takht-e Zarkeh, who lived in the Korsar neighborhood, and also Imam Bakhsh Jadgal, Yousef Nokari, and Asa Javam, who were living the poor suburbs of that period, we accepted the responsibility for doing this and started participating in library activities.

Buying books as a top task in the list

Beside visiting the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and reading the available books, I started touring the bookshops to buy books not available at the libraries to borrow.

Kayhan for Kids magazine, the main subscription

magazine I received every week, had a special section for introducing newly published books and it was a great help to find and list new books. Sometimes when the books were not available at local bookshops, Mr. Heidarian helped me to order and receive them through post.



In the 1980s, I obtained a large number of books through mail and correspondence with various publishers.

In teenage years, despite the difficult conditions of those days, it was a great pleasure to receive such a great number of books through books.

The Paternal Grandmother

My paternal grandmother loved me very much. Whenever she went downtown to do her shopping, she often took me with her for help along the way. As she know what I desire most, she gave me some money to buy one or two volumes of books. This happened to me over and over again, and I was getting newer books every week.

I cannot forget a time when I was insisting to have



a small transistor radio to listen to children and teenagers' programs of time, and again it was she who supported me to achieve my dream!

By the end of 1987, I started publishing my memories of those years in a local magazine and they were widely circulated. It was a great start for me.

Birth of Soroush for Adolescents

In April 1988, something new appeared in the lives of teenagers who read books and liked magazines. Printing and publishing the first issue of Soroush Nojavan opened a new horizons for teenagers. The magazine with a strong team of dedicated and creative writers and managers behind it, provided the conditions for young writers to be seen.

17



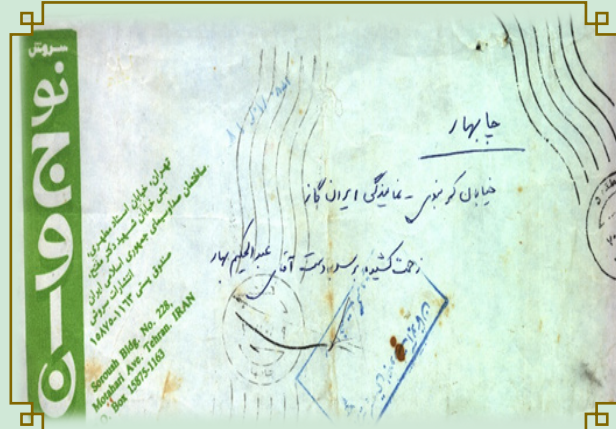
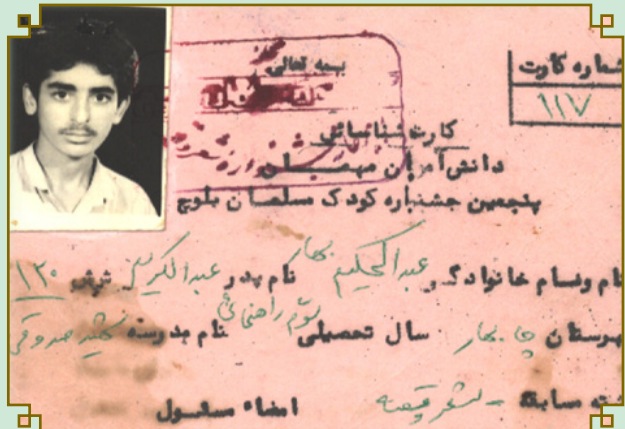
Soroush for Adolescents was not just a magazine for teenagers read and enjoy, it had different sections with good educational topics for teens to practice writing beside their reading exercises. Soroush for Adolescents was not just a literary magazine, it included other topics as cinema, art, journalism, etc. Soroush for Adolescents had such a great variety of contents!

Soroush for Adolescents managed to introduce the best poets, writers, filmmakers, journalists, and other creative etc. to Iranian children, they were included such prominent figures as Qaisar Aminpour, Buick Maleki, Hassan Ahmadi, Fereydoun Amouzadeh Khalili, Afshin Alaa, Mehdi Hejvani, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Abolfazl Jalili, Mehrdad Ghaffarzadeh, Abbas Kiarostami, Karim Nasr, Mohammad Ali Bani Asadi, and others.

Since 1989, I joined the young writers of Soroush for Adolescents and several other publications and provided them with my writings for publication.



In February 1989, the Poetry and Storytelling Festival for Chababhar Children and Adolescents was organized by Baloch Children's Magazine, an event that was attended by a large number of well-known writers and poets for children and adolescents including Mostafa Rahmandoust, Jafar Ebrahimi, Afsaneh Shabannejad, Mohammad Mirkiani, Amir Hossein Fardi, Ebrahim Hassan Beigi, Mehdi Hejvani, Babak Niktalab, Ali Agha Ghaffar, Ali Asghar Nosrati. I used to attend this festival in the next years until 2001 in our neighboring cities of Saravan, Khash, Zabol, Zahedan, Nikshahr and Iranshahr. During those years, I met and talked to many national writers, poets and filmmakers and kept the connection alive through letter exchanges and every year I found new friends.



Leaving School

In 1991, due to some problems, I had to leave school and start a new experience of working in a fishing boats. It was such a hard experience specially in the early days.

Most of the people who worked in that boat were much older than me, and I simply could not communicate with them.

The oppressed traveler of the sea and his book

I remember in my first journey over the sea I carried a notebook with a pen. I had heard that taking a book to the sea is forbidden. So I had to settle for the same notebook and pen.



The late Mullah Majid was a kind captain who was responsible for sailors. He didn't seem to oppose my reading on sea voyages.

One day I talked to him and we had a friendly talk, I asked his permission to carry books on the next trip, and he agreed.

On my second trip, I took a couple of books to the sea. The

captain did not care about my reading at leisure times, but some of the sailors were opposed to my reading and they were constantly grumbling. When I asked the captain about the reason, he described their belief about my reading as it harms their fate, and that I should be very careful with my books.

One day when I was immersed in a book on the deck, the book suddenly slipped out of my hand and like a seabird, it first flew to the sky and then fell into the water. I was really perplexed about what happened in an instant. In The sailors had in fact hit the book to slip away. I saw the book moving calmly on the small waves of the calm water. I took off my shirt and jumped out of the deck into the water and went to the book to save it from drowning.

The beloved books of the sea

As if throwing Iraj is Tired by Davood Amirian into the sea and my diving into the sea after the book, made the sailors' consciences tormented for what they had done, and these all helped me to bring the book back with me and start reading it even more easily. Gradually, the bad habit of not reading books in the Al-Ahmadi fishing ship became turned into a time for reading, and from then on, small a library was seen in a corner of captain's cabin; the masters and sailors started reading books brought to the sea to read and I heard thy talking about the reading habit of their children.

In 1992, I started my national military service and was a guest of Khuzestani friends until June 1994. My two-year trip from Chabahar to Khuzestan, which passed through Shiraz, helped me access and read more books. In September 1995, the situation changed. I left the fishing job at that large ship and started working with a smaller boat that went fishing at night and returned to the port by the day. Thus I



found extra time to continue my studies.

In 1996, I graduated from high school with a degree in electricity.

Goodbye to sea voyages

In November 1997, I was hired by the Ministry of Health to deliver basic health services to the people of Ramin village. This made me depart from mysterious and sweet world of fishing and sea voyages.

My official tasks, that was closely related with all the families of the village, beside providing health services, was an opportunity to consider and discuss the broader social and cultural issues of the region. One of the things that occupied my mind was setting up a library for the children of the village. Unfortunately, there was neither space nor facilities to run it. But this proved to be a great concern for me to start.

The wondering bookshelf

In March 1997, the local Agricultural Organization invited me a production celebration in the village where I met a man named Darvishmanesh. I discussed the issue

of the village library and he warmly welcomed the idea. The story was about a number of books and a shelf that had been left unused in the villages and was kept locked in Agricultural Organization. The suggestion was to transport the shelves and books to Ramin. After touring a few villages and warehouses because of bureaucratic complications, the books finally arrived at Ramin village. They were not high-quality free books and most of them were agricultural manuals, general information and even official reports with a few historical and religious volumes among them. There were no fictional books. In that time and space, however, it formed a library and was a convenient start. A number of young people had already promised to help that if the village had a library and to provide books and executive and managerial tasks. For the library, I talked to the manage of a local religious school. They collaborated and dedicated a room as the space for a public library. But the library did not find the expected reception.



None of the young people came to work. However, I did not let the cloud of despair overshadow the village library as it would return the library to its former location at the warehouse of Agricultural Organization or to uselessly wonder around different villages. Hoping to improve the situation, we moved the shelves and books to one of the rooms of the village Fishing Cooperative Organization and handed over one of the keys to the fishmen so that in the mornings, when I am in charge of the clinic, they can open the room for the people in their leisure time. Again, my dream of an independent local library was denied. With the assistance of Agricultural Organization, we added two full packs of more books to the collection but it seemed as if the good thing was not going to happen. The Fishing Cooperative Organization required its room for internal affairs and we had to leave the library room. Apparently, the fate of the book shelf was to return to the jihad warehouse. I discussed the issue with the friends of Jihad. This time it happened differently. They asked me to keep the shelves and the books and wait to find a better space for the village library. Many years passed, Mr. Darvishmanesh was transferred to Khorasan, and others were retired, and still there was not news from Ramin public library.

Yet another new season

In August 2005, a friend invited me to attend a workshop organized by UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Fund) at the governor's office. Part of the workshop was to talk openly with a number of children and adolescents about their needs. The majority suggested this talk to be performed at the village of



Ramin, and I accepted to organize it. The result of the children's gathering at that day together with the focused conversation of the instructors and participants of the workshop and the continuation of activities with the children of the village, made it possible for the children to talk about their desires and aspirations.

This was dream too. I warmly welcomed the support and cooperation of Massoud Naseri, a member of the Children's Book Council, who



attended in the meeting and promised to fulfill the dream of children and teenagers of Ramin village. A month after the workshop, Massoud Naseri kept his word and soon arrived in the village of Ramin with Ali Golshan, a writer of children and adolescents, with a full pack of books and library supplies. It was the first time that two cultural figures in the field of books to step into the village and were supposed to spend a week with the children. They were to narrate stories and talk about books and make the library more dynamic.

About 400 volumes of books from my own books, along with 1012- packs of new books brought by my friends, provided about 700800- volumes of books for the Ramin Library so that children could access more books. We soon reorganized all the books, wrote down their specifications, and set up a checklist to improve the library's work and children's reading activity. A couple of days later, things were organized and Ramin's Bahar Library was set up in a part of my private house. There were new opportunities for Ramin's children to gather, read books, watch movies, make dolls, play with fabric, sand, and mud, and make colorful crafts, they also made and narrated stories and did dozens of other cultural works.

10 years of hosting children at home

For many years, part of our house was Ramin Children's Library. Every time I went to Tehran and other big cities, I returned with some packs of books and added them to existing books.

At the home environment, village children read books, told stories to each other, and played creative and social games.



Container Library

Gradually, the reading children tempted the elders to start reading. Whenever they saw me, they always asked to think of bigger libraries for the village so that they would use it. I shared their demands with local authorities and village council members. In the middle of 2014, we managed to transfer a shipping container to the place that was intended for the village library. After some repair and painting, the container started to serve as a building for the village library.

After find the specific location for the library and cultural affairs, we started our programs quickly and the good thing started to happen.

By 2014, the village of Ramin, with the efforts of the children and book lovers of the village, was nominated as one of the ten “Bibliophile Villages” of the country. Bibliophile Villages Festival is a national event organized by Iranian Ministry of Culture on an annual basis where ten villages are nominated and introduced as Bibliophile Villages according to their past achievements and future plans for reading promotion. This motivated the village to design and implement even more cohesive cultural and reading promotion programs.

This time a variety of independent activists and organizational stakeholders including council members, village authorities, society of fishers, the healthcare system, and enthusiasts came together to develop reading programs of the library’s children. With their support, even more shelves were installed at the library. The National Ministry of Culture also provided hundreds of books to the village library. By developing even more programs for reading promotion, Ramin won the continuation award from Bibliophile Villages Festival.







Part II:
Reading promotion programs and activities

Ramin Reading Promotion Programs

1. Reading promotion programs for children and teenagers.
2. Reading promotion programs for all family members
3. Reading promotion programs for official settings
4. Reading promotion programs for fishing societies
5. Planning the reading

The program for launching reading network in Sistan and Baluchestan Province

A. Children and adolescents



Start searching over any search engine for the image Sistan children. Deprivation of children in remote areas as Sistan and Baluchestan province is felt in a multiple way. It is important to pay attention to the basic needs of this group. The most convenient way to surpass this deprivation is through educating them and no media can better educate children than simple books. Reading can socialize children and bring them to full awareness of their capacities and the path ahead. Children need to learn and to know how to live together. With this vision, since 2015, we separated children's reading sections of Ramin village from the adult section and transferred the adult library a building near the health center, which was provided by Iranshahr University of Medical Sciences.

B. Establishment of a specialized library and cultural center for children and adolescents and its programs

With the support of a variety of friends, we developed and equipped the Cultural Center and Special Library for Children. There was such a warm collaboration and support by all members of the community (including villagers, writers, publishers, book and reading experts, offices and organizations involved in reading programs, library members, etc.) that cannot be described in words. This association was very instrumental for gathering a large number of quality books for children for the library. An idea was to attract the participation of both children and adults. This was very educational for children themselves, as they would be in direct contact with the knowledge and experience of the adults and they were free to practice their own creativity during the work. During this collaboration, children listened to the stories and memories as narrated by the elders and they started to use their free imagination to colorize, localize and upgrade those narratives according to their specific situation and perspective.



It was the children who introduced the idea of production of traditional puppets. They showed how this simple task can revive a rich reservoir of culture, tradition, art and literature that are on the verge of extinction. (Making all kinds of toys, playing traditional and cultural games, making local and traditional dolls, reviving handicrafts, embroidery and needlework, etc.)

The children also demonstrated their special roles in special programs and ceremonies including International Children's Day, Children Literature

Day, visiting children's writers, commemorations and celebrations, etc. Also new spaces were created to introduce cultural, geographical, regional, historical, and educational settings and their specifications and differences to the children and young adults through active dialogues and creative games. This included discovering the village's indigenous culture, narration of indigenous literature beside global and national literature, the special handicrafts of the region and the way to produce and promote them in a rapidly globalizing world, natural and geographical elements such as mountains and forests, special regional living species such as plants, insects, reptiles, birds, fishes, and cultural foods and , etc. Stories, legends, proverbs, regional and local games, etc.)

The children and adolescents were introduced to the world of journalism and the press and started doing journalistic, reporting and writing activities to practice writing. Special local magazines and publications were designed and beside writing they practiced such activities as preservation and archiving of older publications.

1) Implementation of special summer programs for free times of children with such programs as:

a) Book reading, book review, oral reproduction of stories, open dialogues on books, stories and writers, etc.

b) Doing handicrafts, planting flowers, plants and trees in their home yard, by the library, at school, and any convenient space. Reading extensively books on environmental issues and discussing them.

c) Learning to make traditional toys in the library, participation in painting classes, development of second and third languages, calligraphy, art and other artistic activities.

d) Introducing children to environmental issues and discussing the ways to preserve its health (introduction of such ideas as the earth as our home, animal rights, city and citizenship, and other social and environmental activities.

e) Watching special movies in social settings at the library and talking about the films.

f) Carrying out social activities beside reading activities in group as reading



clubs, which will be discussed in more detail below.

2) For the elders of the village:

a) Poetry programs and poetry nights by local poets and artists.

b) Organization of life and health skills training classes with the participation of health educators and village health workers for the residents.

c) Attracting volunteers interested in cultural activities for women in promotion of reading and culture.

d) The participation of capable women for education and production of traditional toys for children

e) Participation and cooperation between state departments, government agencies as well as local and non-governmental organizations through reading programs for development of cultural programs.

f) Inviting donors interested in cultural activities

g) Dispatching books through local network of health workers and other activists. (Health care providers are the only people who regularly visit all homes during the month, we asked them to identify the reading needs of the family and link them to the library to deliver the required books to the families.)



Design of special book baskets for fishing boats and ships

Ramin village is a fishing port, with more than 200 fishing boats. Managers of the port are members of the Board of Trustees of Ramin Book Reading Program and they have played an important role in development of reading programs including distributing portable baskets for books. Every boat has about 10 crew who may travel to the sea for a month, where they have no access to radio and other media and reading is the only choice for their time. More than 400 special baskets were designed for these fishing boats. They may exchange the baskets when they meet on the sea and would return the borrowed books upon returning to the land to receive other books. One week after the opening of the Ramin Comprehensive Health Services Center in the summer of 1996, the Reading Station was also launched that started to work other reading stations. Dr. Kazem Nazari, the doctor in charge of the clinic, along with the members of the library played a very important role in setting up the reading station.







Reading Clubs for Children and Adolescents

In July 2017, we reorganized the reading activity of Ramin children through the newly launched national “Reading Clubs”. The state Ministry of Culture for the first time had introduced a framework to different cities and villages to develop national reading festivals.

The sense of participation in a festival at a national level, encouraged the children even further. Other cities and regions heard about these and they started visiting Ramin to hear more about this. Even writers visited Ramin and our library members found the chance to meet local and national writers in person. The direct communication between writers and children was a leap forward for every child, a communication that continued in social media and through exchange of letters and books. Writers started sending their newly published books to our library members and they had the chance to listen to the special reading and unique feedback of Ramin children. Thus Ramin became an important cultural hub for writer, reading activists and children to visit and discuss new ideas and books.

The year 2017 became a very productive year for our children and children and teenagers, and all book lovers and readers within and around Ramin. Reading clubs including Mahakn, Nambi, Boujing, Mehr, and others shone well in the entire region and their profiles circulated around the country. The short clips they have created circulated widely in various social media. The reading clubs helped the children to practice group and social reading. They also practiced real dialogues in concrete social setting. As they were aware of their activities in a national context, they also developed a sense



of consciousness necessary for short- and long-term planning. Every club had its own facilitator who managed all the activities in the club. Some of the facilitators were local teachers or other official personnel of state offices, but thanks to the framework provided by the state Ministry of Culture, we learned how to act as facilitators and not official teachers. The facilitators shared responsibilities among the members: One was talking about a book, the other was taking pictures, one was documenting and reporting the session, and the other was filming or else, doing social arrangements with schools and families for a meeting or performance.

The clubs helped the children plan independently and implement the best programs under the supervision of a coach and facilitator.

The Objectives of Reading Clubs

- * Storytelling, reading aloud, book introduction.
- * Discussing books, analysis of book content, oral reproduction of stories for empowering children, self-expression and creating a sense of self-confidence.
- * Creating a free and open social and physical atmosphere for flourishing of creativities among children.
- * Doing social, environmental, and educational activities around the main themes and subjects of the books read by children (idea development and implementation, change of attitude, application of ideas in real life situations, doing practical works such as planting, organizing social events, communication with writers, storytellers, publishers, etc.)
- * Doing educational and experimental works such as practicing foreign

languages, calligraphy, making handicrafts, making video clips and movies, reporting, free writing, etc.

- * Criticizing and reviewing the books read by the members of the group in the club and practicing dialogue and discussion around subjects introduced in the books.

- * Carrying out media activities by creating social media pages, groups, channels, blogs, and preparing notes for local newspapers and other social and virtual networks as a way to reflect the news and activities of reading books.

- * Production of mobile short video clips on the themes and subjects of books they have read.

- * Participation in special library training programs and holding workshops for peers.



Inviting national and local storytellers

Farzaneh Okhovat, a member of the Children's Book Council for Children and Adolescents of Ramin village, 2017.

Farzaneh Okhovat is a writer, researcher, and a member Children's Book Council who also writes for Encyclopedia of Children and Young Adults. She has been in contact with children of Ramin for many years and traveled to Ramin on December 2017. Her travel to Ramin was a productive journey as children learned how make dolls and were initiated with further classical Persian literature. The point about the event was the identification of children with the characters of classical literature introduced by Mrs. Farzaneh Okhovat.

Thursday Readings for the Sea



Another program designed in collaboration with children and young adults, was Thursday Readings for the Sea. This event was specially designed for Ramin children as they were living by the Gulf of Oman. It was such a sweet experience as the children were impatient for the next Thursday to arrive. The children gathered by the sea bank and they were starting to read books in groups for each other and for the sea. The programs attracted nearly all the children and it had such a huge impact on the village. The fishers who were working in the sea welcomed the idea and encouraged the children. During the other days of the week, children were often talking about their reading experience with their families and peers. In a short time, everybody at the village were talking about the event and new spaces were created for

Bibliophiles the magazine for Ramin's reading children

In the summer of 2017, we started publishing a new magazine for Ramin's reading children. The magazine is not widely circulated and it is only for Ramin's children. The magazine both covered both the news about books and reading, and published pieces and reports written by children and young adults. It provided a convenient space for the kids to practice writing.



Commemoration of the National Day of Children's Literature in the village of Ramin

Every year on July 9, which coincides with the anniversary of the death of Mehdi Azar Yazdi, the national writer for the children who is famous for the reproduction of a great number of ancient and classical literature for children, a special ceremony is organized at Ramin Library. This is a very special occasion for Ramin children to gather and talk about books and literary works.

Houshang Moradi Kermani's birthday party in Ramin village.



Houshang Moradi Kermani is another contemporary Iranian writer for children, whose Tales of Majid is hugely popular among school children as it portrays the life of ordinary and traditional people of Iran. His birthday is on September 7, when children and young adults of Ramin Library gather together and celebrate his birthday. It is a very simple celebration but yet another occasion for the children to read, think, discuss, and plan. A week earlier, the members of library start and prepare for the ceremony, they review Moradi Kermani's works and even prepare for theatrical performances of some chapters of his work. Usually the ceremony starts with Mr. Moradi Kermani's live or written message and by the end of the ceremony children send some audio, written or video messages to the writer. Everybody at the ceremony feels so close to this great national writer and it is such a great socializing event around books and stories for a group of children who are deprived of fabulous cultural events available at larger

cities.

Internal meetings of Ramin reading promotion committee

Every evening, older members of Ramin Library gather to discuss further plans for development of library activities. These heterogenous meetings are sometimes attended by children and great ideas are presented for everybody to consider. The ideas are either implemented or written down for further discussion and development. The very meeting is a great occasion for everybody to feel the pleasure of participation in planning for the future.

Annual reading contest in Ramin Library

Every year, Ramin School students after five months of reading from October to February, participate in the book reading competition created by the Ramin Reading Promotion House, and at the end of February, the judges introduce and award the best readers of the village.

Supplying books for children in need of special care

There are some children who are interested in reading books but are not able to attend the library due to physical problems. These are also beloved members of the library and there is great race among normal members of library to provide services to these members. Disability and illness is no longer a cause for not reading and they find an easy access to books they want and also a group of friends with whom they can talk about books and other social events.

The media coverage of reading programs at Ramin

The village of Ramin has been the focus of national and local media attention. This unprecedented situation is just because of special reading promotion programs organized and launched at Ramin library. Now most of the programs enjoy a widespread media coverage and Ramin is well-known for its reading promotion programs. This is great responsibility for us as we should provide an ethical and practical model for other villages both in the region and at a national and international level.

Book festival and celebration of reading clubs of Chabahar city in the bibliophile village of Ramin

For the first time, at the suggestion of Bahar Book Promotion House, Chabahar Book Festival was held in November 2017 at village of Ramin, a program with the participation of Chabahar Free Zone Organization, Chabahar Culture Office, and support of Fisheries, local authorities, and Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults of



Chabahar. A large crowd from the village and neighboring villages attended this event and it received wide media coverage.

Musical and theatrical performances, Shahnameh recitation, celebrations of book club members, face-to-face reading competitions, local games and dozens of other programs were among the programs of the first Chabahar Book Festival, hosted by the village of Ramin. It was such a unique and unprecedented event as it is remembered both in the local community and the neighboring villages has provided a model for a number of other events. The first celebration, which took place on November 14, 2017, was attended by more than 300 children, teenagers and young people. The significant presence of the people in the first book festival showed the importance of reading programs in this village.



In addition to the presence of ordinary people, this cultural event was attended by a number of local authorities. At the end of the event, the

authorities presented the reading baskets to local fisheries.

Ramin Library visited by students of Chabahar

In national book program, in late November one week is dedicated as Week of the Book. A number of events on books and reading are organized in every corner of the country. This was an opportunity for children of the region to visit Ramin Library. Ramin Reading Promotion House hosted a large number of visitors and countless students from Chabahar and other cities and villages. In addition to visiting the library, hundreds of students were initiated to library's various programs as models for their own practice at home.

Ramin Library hosting writers and poets



In mid-March 2017, at the final days of winter, Mohammad Ali Dehghani, the prominent poet and writer for children and adolescents, spent seven days with the children and adolescents of the bibliophile village of Ramin. It was a great time for children to learn and practice writing, storytelling, reading and discussing.

Activities of Ramin Library

Nowruz in Ramin Library

From antiquity Iranians celebrate the coming of spring on March 21. They have calculated the exact time in minute and seconds. This marks the beginning of the new year that starts with 13 days of holidays when people meet and celebrate the new year. On March 21 2018 that marked the beginning of 1397 Iranian calendar, Ramin Library hosted a group of children as well as national writers and reading activists from all over Iran. A special Haft-Sin table was spread for the first time in the library, a traditional table ornamented with seven symbols of fertility, prosperity and wisdom, etc.



Such individuals as Mahmoud Amouzegar, Head of Publisher's Union and Ali Asghar Seidabadi, writer and reading promotion activist were present among the children waiting for the new year to arrive. It was such a pleasurable moment for children as they found more time and space to listen to the experiences of national personalities and to talk about their own dreams for the new year and for their future.

Running the first mobile library for Ramin and surrounding villages

Abdulkhaleq Bahar's continuous efforts to set up a mobile rural library finally came to fruition, and this happened in early April 2016. Recognizing the book-reading programs of Ramin village and Abdulkhaleq Bahar himself, The Free Zone Organization agreed to donate a minibus to the village and surrounding villages as a mobile rural library.

Very soon, the mobile library travelled across the region to cover the surrounding villages to reach children and teenagers of the villages of Camp, Moradabad, Osmanabad, City Outskirts, Balsar, Ahmadabad, and other areas.



The special space of Ramin Bibliophile Village at Tehran International Book Exhibition



Tehran International Book Exhibition is a unique event in Iran and in fact in the entire region. More than 10 million people from different cities attend this event. They are all interested in books and want to know what are new in the book market. Even the internet and new social media with its

rapid circulation of news about books could not overwhelm TIBF.

In May 2018, by the invitation and coordination of the Ministry of Culture, a special room was dedicated for Ramin Bibliophile village in 31st TIBF to present its cultural achievements and book reading programs. What astounded us was the fact that so many people already knew us! Ramin is at almost the farthest point to Tehran with around 2000 kilometers distance. Yet everybody knew us and asked specific questions about Ramin Library, the children and how they access books. They even knew the names of our library members.

During the 10 days of exhibition we found even more friends who were asking if they can come to our village to spend their holidays and if they can help by providing books and accessories. Upon a call by visitors, a book donation campaign was organized in Instagram and other social media and to our astonishment, dozens of book packages were gathered. We returned with a huge pile of new and quality books for the library.

This presence in a high profile and prestigious national event happened in the next year, 2019 where Ramin attended with more local colors and stories to present to the TIBF visitors. Ramin is no longer a far from the center village. People ask if it is possible to visit it and how they can contribute to its development. This is the miraculous result of books and reading.

Becoming a member of Central Coordination Council for Bibliophile Villages



The idea of a coordinating council for bibliophile villages was first introduced

by Ali Asghar Seidabadi and other people at Ministry of Culture. Initially, representatives of fifty villages elected the five main members of this council. The mission of the council is to develop new programs and activities for reading promotion across the country. Abdulhakim Bahar became a member of the council. This meant more responsibilities and more tasks to do.

Being elected in the first Coordinating Council of the Network of the Bibliophile Villages, created a new wave of programs for implementation. It was such an important council connected both to high state authorities and the ordinary people, activists, and NGOs all over the country. In the first session a joint program was introduced between two ministries of culture and health and a collaboration scheme was designed. The idea was to provide new ground for closer collaboration between village authorities and local health and educational staff. All these projects started in Sistan and Baluchestan province as pilot projects, and then the results were analyzed and sent for implementation at the national level.

As mentioned earlier, Ramin library received many books and there were so many repetitive books. We started listing the books and created a network of reading promotion volunteers. It was a small-scale network, acting at province level. Then we asked the volunteers to create reading clubs and start reading. The idea spread very rapidly. We started from Chabahar, and very soon arrived at Iranshahr and surrounding villages. Women had a very definitive role in all these programs. Ms. Rahmeh Parvizpour was the first person in Iranshahr to create a reading group and it was a very decisive for the entire project. On the other side, we developed the network toward Lirdov, Kashi, and other western cities of the province and developed more reading groups in Vanak and Kerti villages. These reading clubs are still active and such local facilitators as Ms. Hadizadeh are developing them to more cities and locations.

More than twenty key volunteers and facilitators started to work in this network and Chabahar was selected as a hub for programming and coordinating. The volunteers worked sincerely and developed a sense of sympathy required for true development of the network. Every day new members and volunteers joined and a functional hub for idea development

and implementation task groups was activated in the entire region. The monthly meetings of book promoters' network in Chabahar have its special charm. The meetings of the are held in remote villages, and with each meeting, newer people and ideas emerge, making the ground even more ready for more initiatives.

With the help of this network, more than 20 new libraries for children, adolescents, and adults in Baluchestan and Hormozgan provinces were set up and equipped. These libraries have shown their impact in reading promotion programs even in the short-term. Books and supplies are provided to children by educators and reading and librarianship programs are launched extensively. Libraries are great social and cultural centers, that function to complement schools and social systems.

Ramin Library as a location for video documentary of reading programs



An important part of reading activities in the village of Ramin is visible and interesting subject for everybody. Mr. Moin Karim al-Dini, who was in charge of documenting the reading promotion programs, preferred to make part of the documentary in Ramin village and its library. He chose to report the reading children and mobile basket of books for fishmen as part of the documentary. The documentary is broadcasted in several TV channels.

Iftar ceremony of the members with Ali Asghar Seidabadi

Ali Asghar Seidabadi is a famous and active person who is both a writer

for children and an activist for the cause of books. One Ramadan of 2018 he visited Ramin village to advice for the documentary and some other project. He sat with our children at the library for a day and created a warm atmosphere of reading, recitation, and narration for everybody. At the end of the day, they sat for Iftar of the last day of Ramadan.

Training classes for photography and movie making



Preparing reports for different media is part of any reading promotion task as it has a huge effect both at the performance of the group and introduces the program as a model to others for adoption. Members of library showed a great enthusiasm to learn basic theories and techniques of preparing video documentaries. Abdulhakim Bahar in a talk with Nahid Rezaei, a prominent national documentary maker, organized a series of workshops for 20 days where children cheerfully learned the basic principles and techniques of preparing video documentaries.

The third round of Reading Clubs for Children and Adolescents



Reading Clubs for Children and Adolescent is an annual program performed at national level. Abdulhakim Bahar attended the workshops to talk about the latest experiences of reading clubs and prepare for the implementation of the third round. Then he coordinated the preparation and distribution of books and held special workshops and meetings to discuss the development of reading clubs at the village level. In this third round, just 56 reading clubs were established at Ramin, which covered about 700 children. Some clubs that were managed according the common educational rules and procedures appeared weaker, but those clubs that were managed according such principles as freedom of children, creativity, dialogue among members, and respect for other ideas, showed greater achievements.

Ramin as host for the second book festival of Chabahar

In 2019 for a second time, the village of Ramin became a host for celebration

of the books of Chabahar city. The celebration, which took place at the same time as the National Book Week that happens around November, took place in the magnificent Ramin Fishing Bay. The special guest of the celebration was Ezzatullah Alvandi, the famous writer for children and young adults who narrated some stories and memories for children. Abdulhakim Bahar also informed the audience about some of the activities of children and adolescents and the people of Ramin in organizing the performance of reading programs. The head of the Culture Office and other city officials who were present at the cultural conference spoke about the book reading and book programs. At the end of the ceremony, the books of several Chabahari writers were unveiled.

Poets, writers and artists traveling Ramin



Because of intensive and far-reaching reading activities, Ramin became a tourist destination for book lovers, writers and poets. Every once in a while, children and teenagers of Ramin have guest from Tehran and other regions of the country. Most of them are writers, poets, and cultural activists. Shiva Moghanloo, translator of children's books, Hadis Lazar Ghlolami, children's writers, Shermin Naderi, Ali Akbar Kermaninejad, Farzaneh Aghapour, Siavosh Sattari, Hossein Rigi, Setareh Eskandari, Aboulfazl Jalili, Behnoush

Bakhtiar, are among the famous people who visited Ramin and were introduced to the activities of members of Ramin Library.

The Minister of Culture visiting Ramin



A small fishing port, because of its reading promotion activities became so famous that the Iranian Minister of Culture in his tour to the region, visited Ramin. Dr. Abbas Salehi together with some very high regional authorities including the governor of Sistan province in a very delicate morning visited Ramin. This simple visit that was centered on the library, made the library a very important institution in the village. Such visits are very rare in the village and people, especially children, regard it as a very important event and an opportunity for development.

Farhad Hassanzadeh's birthday

April 10, 2018 the children once again showed the calendar page where it was marked with Farhad Hassanzadeh's birthday. He is such a famous writer and Ramin's children are living among his books. The birthday ceremony, whether at direct presence of the writer or his virtual meeting, makes an everlasting impact on young readers of the village. This impact is very different with the one experienced by children who are living at the same city as Farhad Hassanzadeh.

Fourth Round of Reading Clubs: Ramin Workshops



Usually, the workshops of Reading Clubs where facilitators gather to talk about the process, are held in the center of the provinces. Sistan province is an exception because the active reading center of Ramin Library. A two day workshop was held during the warm summer of 2019. The workshop was a hub where local cultural authorities, writers, researchers, booksellers, educators, librarians, reading activists, and facilitators gather and discuss the process of Reading Clubs formation and the experiences they have in the past three rounds. One again Ramin showed its hospitality, the people invited some of the guests to their home, and all participants visited different parts of library. Library is a simple building; it is the children that makes it a living space. There was time for some children to narrate their personal story of building the library and the effect it had on their life.

Media Attachments

Collection of Media Attachments:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/17oRbctyrRKZ1uhmY_kUkV6q4YXRoWVsQ/view?usp=drivesd

Short Link: <https://b2n.ir/091041>

Collection of Pictures:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bKr8pAyLeKZh7mwqyg4481LV1ow4h8uB/view?usp=drivesdk>

Short Link: <https://b2n.ir/621809>

Collection of Introductory Clips (Part One)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dJN6uLgM2FASozAmTENc3J7PI2mvaME_/view?usp=drivesdk

Short Link: <https://b2n.ir/026619>

Collection of Introductory Clips (Part Two)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-UCXjDiVjIkjT76qtIwcTN8ZD1Uvs7GD/view?usp=drivesdk>

Short Link: <https://b2n.ir/606619>

Collection of Introductory Clips (Part Three)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-OOvoiC4mio64wUgAJ5_h3d7dHqdGJKD/view?usp=drivesdk

Short Link: <https://b2n.ir/076742>

Full Length Documentary:

<https://vimeo.com/444957969>

Password to View: bahar15

