

University of Florence Supporting Civic Society in Afghanistan

From February 14 until March 11, 2011, the University of Florence is offering an intensive training course on *Urban Analysis and Management* to a delegation from the city of Herat/Afghanistan consisting of professors of Herat University, of members of the city administration, and the staff of the Ministry for Urban Development.

This initiative is part of a pilot project conducted by the *Laboratory for Social Geography* at the Dipt. for Historical and Geographic Studies, University of Florence, under the direction of Prof. Mirella Loda, financed by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Dipt. for Cooperation in Development).

The cooperation project aims at creating a reliable data base about Herat territory as well as at improving the professional skills of local urban planners within a framework of environmental and social sustainability. The project activities consist in a series of lectures and research at the *Laboratory for Social Geography* in Florence, in field surveys in Herat, and in the processing of the surveyed data. Main goal of the project is sustaining civic society in a country ravaged by war and civil war; moreover the project offers opportunities to deepen our knowledge about a highly complex and rapidly evolving reality which we usually come to perceive exclusively in its military aspects.

The course will be concluded on March 11 by a public conference of architect Jolyon Leslie, Chief Executive Officer of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Afghanistan from 2006 – 2010.