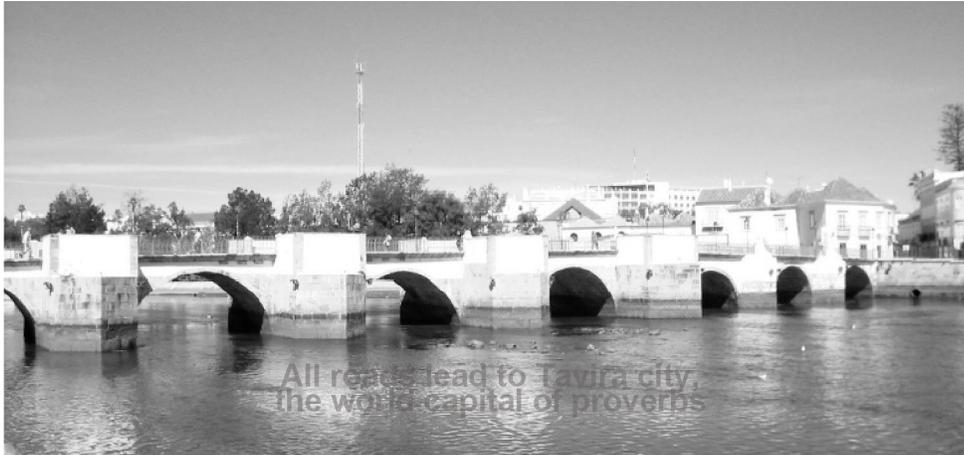




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Crowdsourcing Works: How to Create a Global #AfghanProverbs Corpus, Conversation and Community with Social Media

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Captain Edward ZELLEM, United States Navy/United States

ABSTRACT

This paper will present a real-world case study and proven social media techniques that have been successfully used to “crowdsource” the paremiography of Afghan Proverbs and build a global community of interest using the Internet and mobile phones. One result of this previously unexplored methodology is a new bilingual English-Pashto book entitled *Mataluna: 151 Afghan Pashto Proverbs* (*Mataluna* means ‘Proverbs’ in Pashto). The book, published in June 2014 and available worldwide, is the first of its kind and includes 50 original illustrations by Afghan high school students in Kabul.

Mataluna was created in response to requests by Pashto speakers around the world after the publication of two earlier books of Afghan Dari Proverbs, *Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs* and *Afghan Proverbs Illustrated*, bilingual in English and Dari and also featuring Afghan student illustrations. Both these books have won several national-level awards in the USA, and *Afghan Proverbs Illustrated* has been translated by a global team of volunteers and published in 12 additional languages.

In addition to publishing *Mataluna*, documented collateral effects of the **Pashto Proverbs Project** have been to:

- ▶ Create a new and still-growing bilingual corpus of Afghan Pashto Proverbs through social media engagement and dialogue;
- ▶ Build bridges of cultural understanding between Afghans and the rest of the world;
- ▶ Create a highly interactive online base of over 8500 people, and a social media platform that has at times reached over 900,000 subscribers worldwide with a single proverb;
- ▶ Popularize Afghan Proverbs and build a documented base of fans and followers in 77 countries, many of whom had no previous exposure to, or interest in, Afghan Proverbs;
- ▶ Promote Paremiology and Afghan Proverbs in over 30 media engagements;
- ▶ Enhance cultural pride and ethnic/national unity among Afghans;
- ▶ Facilitate documented, observable dialogue and debate on proverbs between Afghans and citizens of neighboring countries in Central and South Asia such as Pakistan, India and Iran;
- ▶ Analyze, establish, and begin to build a paremiological minimum for Afghanistan using definable metrics;

- ▶ Use Afghanistan's own proverbs as culturally appropriate, highly effective tools for Afghan language learning, literacy, and refugee integration around the world;
- ▶ Create a large, easily reachable, highly interactive, online "community of interest" of native Dari and Pashto speakers who are willing to contribute to, and participate in, additional paremiological and paremiographical research;
- ▶ Establish and document what may be a new paremiographical and paremiological methodology for further exploration, analysis and development. Web-based crowdsourcing has been used by scholars to create dictionaries for languages that are less academically developed, but this is the first known effort to collect proverbs and build an engaged global proverbs community in this way.

This paper will present modern, field-tested techniques and opportunities for paremiologists to successfully collect, analyze, distribute and popularize proverbs from any language, anywhere in the world, resulting in easily documentable and archivable metrics for databasing and scientific analysis.

More information is available at www.afghansayings.com or on Twitter [@afghansayings](https://twitter.com/afghansayings).