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The SHARE Institute Newsletter – Winter-2002  
(Social, Health, Assessment, Research, & Education)

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A quarterly newsletter written for The SHARE Institute Community.

Feel free to share this newsletter by forwarding it to those who may be interested in learning about making a positive difference in people's lives. We are proud to include you as part of our community and plan on incorporating you in future SHARE Institute mailings. We respect the privacy of your email address and do not share such information with any other organizations. If you wish to be taken off the mailing list, contact [sstolba@theshareinstitute.org](mailto:sstolba@theshareinstitute.org).

Visit our updated website at <http://www.theshareinstitute.org>.

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A Few Words from The SHARE Institute's President

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In October 2002, I joined a team consisting of Ms. Sima Wali, Afghan advocate and President of REFWID, and Dr. Michelle Andina, medical anthropologist to travel to Kabul. The trip was a very long one via London and Dubai. I worked with representatives of 17 non-profit organizations to teach them techniques of "Proposal Writing." The workshop was a great success with interactive sessions and discussions about women's issues. Women spoke about the importance of literacy and the lack of funding from foreign donors to initiate projects that would stimulate the economy. During the trip, I visited the three home-based schools funded by the SHARE Institute. Our literacy schools will graduate 45 women and children in May. I visited several other successful non-profit organizations and funded another 320 women attending literacy and vocational training classes.

Another widow's vocational training was funded and a street-children Program was established. The needs are great in Afghanistan. Many women spoke openly about their traumatic experiences during the Taliban regime. However, they all seemed to be eager to work hard to rebuild their country. They need technical assistance and funding. The SHARE Institute is starting a campaign to help orphans in a Kabul Orphanage. Many of the children have mothers who are unable to provide their children with food or shelter. The children are left in the orphanage and many cry for their mothers for days. My hope is to be able to collect enough money to start a program to help some of the mothers learn skills that will allow them to reclaim their children from the orphanage.

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New Mini-Grants

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**Educational Training Center for Poor Women and Girls of Afghanistan**

The Educational Training Center for Poor Women and Girls was established to teach women and girls how to read and write up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. In the training center there are a total of 240 students. The Educational Training Center's main goal is to help these students to become self-sufficient through literacy and income generation skills. The students attend both literacy classes and vocational training classes that teach sewing, needlework and hairdressing. The students are expected to take their third grade level exam in May 2003.

**Medical Expenses for Children of Poor Single Mothers.** In addition to the above mentioned mini-grant, the SHARE Institute has made donations to help single and widowed mothers pay for prescriptions and medical care for their sick children.

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### **The New Afghanistan Woman Association**

The New Afghanistan Woman Association (NAWA) is a non-profit educational and cultural association in Afghanistan. NAWA has been funded to start three new classes; two home-based literacy classes and the third would be an English class. Previously SHARE has funded three literacy classes and NAWA was the implementing agency. The excellent quality of instruction led to the funding of these additional classes. NAWA has proposed an English class because of the tremendous demand on English language translations.

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### **W.O.M.A.N. (World Organization for Mutual Afghan Network)**

W.O.M.A.N. is a non-profit organization promoting rehabilitation of Afghan women, children and their families in Afghanistan. The main objective of this organization is to teach widows about design, quality sewing and jewelry-making. Currently, W.O.M.A.N. sponsors 61 classes for girls and women between the ages of 5-45. The SHARE Institute has provided a mini-grant to help purchase sewing and decorative materials needed to design and make jewelry. These skills will help women earn a higher income.

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### **MMCC**

MMCC is a program created by David Mason to help street children in Kabul. Currently, MMCC is seeking sponsors to help them fund the coordination of non-aggressive Olympic Games for street children. The mini-grant will help fund a portion of the cost for the events. MMCC plans to offer training and artistic consultations for street children. There will be an emphasis on improving social skills through ethnic cooperation in games.

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Afghan Girls' Literacy Program: School-to-School Program

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**Lessons in Cross-Cultural Miscommunication**

While visiting the literacy classes for Afghan girls, Dr. Soheir Stolba distributed the cards made by American children in the School-to-School Program. Dr. Stolba explained to the classes that children from Santa Cruz had written them postcards. The girls were very pleased to know that people in the United States are thinking about them. Even though the girls were pleased to receive the cards, there was a great deal of difficulty understanding what the children were trying to say. Life in Afghanistan is so incredibly different from life in the US—that the girls could not conceive of the hobbies the kids wrote about. This was difficult for them to understand because the children in Afghanistan do not have hobbies—due to poverty and lack of free time.

The Afghan girls tried to understand what the American children were saying, but it was very difficult to explain some of the children's hobbies. For instance, one child's hobby was water skiing. Dr. Stolba attempted to describe water skiing to the girls, explaining that a person holds on to the back of a moving boat and tries to stand on water. The girls were very confused by such a notion and asked, "Why would anyone want to stand on water?" Another child talked about spending time with their pets, which was yet another difficult concept to explain. The girls did not know what pets were or why people would want to keep dirty animals in their house. Even when Dr. Stolba explained that these were clean animals they could not understand. Although the Afghani girls greatly appreciated the sentiment of the American children, there was an obvious cross-cultural miscommunication. The SHARE Institute would like to thank Ms. Laskin, the School-to-School Program director, for all her efforts in fundraising and for making the cards available for the Afghani girls.

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Mini Grant Report

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**REPORTING ON WOCOL'S MINI-GRANT IN NIGERIA**

The SHARE Institute has awarded a mini-grant to the Nigerian NGO WACOL, which aims to provide rural women in Nigeria with basic information on sexual and reproductive health. However, this time WACOL used the funding to produce and distribute a newsletter publication targeted at adolescents in rural Nigeria. The newsletter, "Voice of Adolescents" was used to: (1) enable adolescents with adequate and accurate information on sexual and reproductive health—to empower them to participate in designing the reproductive health information, (2) ascertain their sources of information and means of communication with their peers, (3) empower the adolescents to exert more control over their sexual and reproductive lives, and (4) to raise awareness on the

preventive measures for HIV/AIDS and to reduce the health related problems caused by ignorance.

In order to incorporate the adolescents in this project, two adolescent volunteers and peer Health Educators were completely involved at all stages of creating the newsletter. Furthermore, stories, poems, cartoons and other articles written and created by adolescents were featured in the newsletter. This particular newsletter focused on child trafficking, labor, abuse and neglect and provided adolescents with methods to avoid and to fight against these evils. This newsletter provides information to adolescents who are otherwise denied such information by their parents, teachers and society. The newsletter provided a forum for the adolescents to voice their concerns and have their questions answered.

The newsletters were distributed to adolescents in secondary schools and the annual Art Competition, thus an estimated 1,000 adolescents were reached.

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### **A Sample of Cards from Afghan Children**

In October, the SHARE Institute delivered the post cards made by the American children in the School-to-School Program in Santa Cruz, California. In response to the children's post cards, the Afghani girls wrote back. Here are their translated letters to the children in California:

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My Friend,

My name is Parwana. I am in the second class of the literacy home school. I try to learn as much as I can everyday. We are happy for your attention and help. Thank you for the beautiful post card.

Sincerely,

Parwana

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Dear Students,

I am Shakeela, daughter of Ali Ahmad. I am in the second class of the literacy home school. I live in Kabul. I hope to become literate and educated so that I may become a teacher in Leotver. I also look forward to learning English. Thanks for your postcard.

Shakeela

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My name is Shabnam. My father would not let me go to regular school. Now that I can go to school I am very happy to learn. Thank you so much.

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## Internships

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### **An Intern from Azerbaijan**

The SHARE Institute has a new intern that has come to us through the International Exchange Board funded by the U.S. government. Dr. Khuraman Hasanova, a pediatrician, is from the Republic of Azerbaijan, a former republic of the Soviet Union. Dr. Hasanova is working with Project Child Survival, funded by Mercy Corp International. This is a 5-year project that aims to educate rural communities on child health issues and also to reconstruct the health center in the communities.

As part of the program, Dr. Hasanova was sent to do research work at the University of Texas Science Center, School of Public Health for 3 months. The research she was conducting was aimed at noting how other countries implemented such similar programs and what obstacles they encountered. The program also required that she spend one month participating in an internship in which she could partake in fundraising activities and other community projects.

Dr. Hasanova hopes the experiences she has had in the U.S will help her when she goes back to implement Project Child Survival. The project itself will educate nurses, midwives, as well as the community at large on how to deal with child health issues such as diarrhea, dysentery, and worms and other health issues of great concern amongst the rural population in Azerbaijan. The project wants to involve the entire community in a discussion on ways to prevent such health dangers in children. The project also aims to reach the internal displaced population in Azerbaijan—who have virtually no access to health care professionals, hospitals or medicines.

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Internships are open to students, professionals, or the general public and will be developed depending on the Intern's interests, skills, time commitment, and the Institute's current projects and activities. Please contact Soheir Stolba for more information about internships.

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## Public Speaking Events

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On Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Stolba gave a lecture hosted by the Women's resource Center at Sacramento State University. The lecture reported on the recent trip to Afghanistan and was well received.

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## Visitors and Friends of SHARE

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On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Dr. Saira Mian, a scientist affiliated with The SHARE Institute, and a big supporter of our work, visited the SHARE Office. She was briefed by the SHARE President about current activities and the findings from the Afghanistan trip. Dr. Mian was impressed with the large number of mini-grants offered to Afghan NGOs and other mini-grants awarded to Jordanian, Yemeni, and Nigerian NGOs.

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## Website

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Please take a look at the new and exciting additions to our website [www.theshareinstitute.org](http://www.theshareinstitute.org). As our organization grows, we view the website is a useful tool to inform people about the projects of the SHARE Institute.

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## Gift Donation Cards

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Many friends of the Institute send holiday gift donation cards to family and friends. Gift donation cards are a great way to celebrate a holiday, accomplishment, or special occasion by giving to those who are less fortunate. By giving a tax-deductible gift donation, the “gift recipient” will receive a beautiful card acknowledging the donation in her/his name, and health and well-being projects around the world will receive the funds that they so desperately need. Gift donations can be earmarked for a certain project, or be used for the projects that most need funds.

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Other ways to help:

\*\*Donate money to the mini-grant program. Tax-deductible donations of any amount will help local people further improve their lives. Contributors may suggest types of projects for the Institute to launch.

\*\*Spread the word. Let others know about the SHARE Institute and how they can help.

\*\*Get involved. We would love to have you make a difference in international and domestic issues. Let us know your interests and how you can share your skills.

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