

Canadian Women for
Women in Afghanistan
*Understanding Human
Rights in Afghanistan*





Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens

TEACHERS' RESOURCE BOOKLET

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Introduction

“Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan: *Canadian Students as Global Citizens*” is a resource kit for Canadian teachers to expand students’ understanding of human rights, particularly those of women and children in Afghanistan. This kit was developed by *Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan)* in partnership with International Development students from the University of Calgary and teachers from Grades 3 to 12; and was produced with the support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). *CW4WAfghan* is a volunteer solidarity network founded in 1996. Members from over ten chapters and affiliated groups across Canada are committed to raising awareness of the plight of women in Afghanistan.

Through the use of this resource, Canadian students will learn about their own basic human rights and the concept of universality of human rights. Using Afghanistan as a case study, they will examine how and why human rights need to be protected and see examples of what life is like when these rights are taken away. Students are then challenged to find ways in which they can assist oppressed people around the world in reclaiming those rights. They learn that even as individuals, their contributions can make a difference in a global environment.

The similarities between Afghan families and Canadian families are emphasized in order to help the students empathize with Afghan children and thus prompt them to want to contribute to a more secure, prosperous and equitable world for everyone. Students will learn that as a nation of peacemakers and peacekeepers, Canada plays an important role in the Global Village protecting and promoting human rights for all people worldwide.

The Teachers’ Resource kit comprises: this Resource Booklet which includes background information and resources; a Power Point presentation and script; interactive game cards and instructions; and lesson plans tied to provincial curricula.

Addressing the diverse needs of students and learning styles

The diverse needs and learning styles of students are addressed by providing teachers with a selection of teaching tools through various media. Visual images form a large part of this resource, through the slide presentation and web site references. Discussion of issues provides a forum for using and developing verbal skills and independent thought processes. The game portion of the kit allows students to play-act the part of an Afghan person and express their feelings and reactions to various real-life situations. Lesson plans and book suggestions provide material for further exploration of the issues.

Suggestions for follow-up actions allow an opportunity for the students to take a leadership role in effecting change and to receive real feedback from their positive actions.

Description of Resource

This teachers' resource kit consists of three main sections which can be used together or separately. Students will need some background knowledge to use the Interactive Game, but this can be acquired through resources other than the Presentation (eg. Deborah Ellis' book series "*The Breadwinner*"). All of the necessary materials can be downloaded from the web site www.w4wafghaneducation.ca.

Section 1: Presentation

The resource kit provides visual images through a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by a teacher's script (**Appendix A**). This portion introduces the concept of human rights and how they apply to all people. Life in Afghanistan before, during and after the rule of the Taliban regime is discussed. Women and children's human rights are highlighted and changes in accessibility to these rights can be discussed with the students. At the end of the script, suggested *Questions and Answers* are provided for further discussion. This *Resource Booklet* also gives a brief recent history of Afghanistan and information on some of the issues. Many more resources can be found on the internet and in print.

Section 2: Interactive Game

This interactive game helps students identify with the plight of the Afghan people by allowing them to follow the lives of individuals through the pre- to post-Taliban time frame in Afghanistan. Character card preparation and instructions are provided in **Appendix B**.

Students work in groups of 2 or 3 and each group is assigned an Afghan character using a set of colour-coded *Character Cards*. Although the characters themselves are fictitious, their stories represent real situations that Afghan people have actually experienced. The colour coding represents four profile categories: 1) blue - urban affluent population, 2) green - urban middle-class, 3) yellow - rural middle-class, and 4) red - urban and rural poor. The number of cards in each colour set reflects approximate percentages of the actual Afghan population in each grouping. A *Human Rights Chart* listing basic human rights is also given out to each student group.

The students are then instructed to gather in various parts of the room according to the colours on their character cards. This offers them a visual impression of the size of each profile category.

The teacher and the class work together to fill out a human rights chart based on their own access to human rights. The children may then read the card labeled "1994", representing life in Afghanistan before the rule of the Taliban. They are asked to identify some of the basic human rights that are represented in the life of their character and to record them on the human rights chart. They then move on to the card labeled "1996" and then the card labeled "present" representing the time frames during and after the reign of the Taliban. Discussion about the changes in access to human rights experienced

by the characters is encouraged and teachers are provided with key points for further exploration of the characters and their situations in the *Character Analyses* provided in **Appendix C**.

Section 3: Activity and Resource Materials

Suggestions for concrete actions that students can undertake either as individuals or as a group are provided in **Appendix D**. Resources in the form of printed materials, web addresses and suggested supplementary reading are also part of the kit.

Lesson plans have been designed for grades four and up (see **Appendix F**). These activities provide students and teachers with the opportunity to further explore the relevant issues with their class in the time frame available to them.

Curriculum Connections

The project is linked to provincial curricula in the promotion of responsible citizenship. The desired learning outcomes are: the understanding of human rights as a universal goal; recognizing that the freedom to exercise human rights is different for Afghan people than it is for Canadians; and challenging Canadian students to actively participate as global citizens. A chart showing ties to the Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec provincial curricula is provided in **Appendix E**. More detailed connections and updates to curricula will be available on our web site.

Background Situation in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a country of great beauty and rich history. The country, about the size of Saskatchewan is home to approximately 30 million people of various ethnic and tribal origins. The Afghan people are world-renowned for their hospitality, courage and deep faith. In the 1960's and earlier, Kabul, the capital was the Paris of Southeast Asia and the mountains and countryside were a trekker's paradise. Afghanistan's recent history however has been suffused with tragedy. Just as Afghan women were making progress on the path of emancipation and having their rights entrenched in the Afghan Constitution, the horrors of over 20 years of war began and sent the entire country back into the Stone Age.

In the 1960's women's rights were expanding. Women formed an important and integral part of Afghan society. Over 70% of teachers, 40% of doctors and 50% of government workers were women.

In the late 1970's a fledgling communist movement began to gain momentum and culminated in the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets in 1979. Opposition, supported by the United States, Iran and Pakistan, grew in the form of the Mujahideen or "soldiers of God". Civilians were caught in between these two forces, the Soviets endeavoring to eliminate opposition to their regime and the more extreme of the Mujahideen groups targeting women and the educated. Murder, rape, disappearances were common and could come from any front. The Soviets planted countless land mines throughout the country and destroyed entire villages in their endeavor to defeat the Mujahideen.

By 1989 however, the Soviets, bankrupted by the war and defeated by the tenacity of the Afghans, withdrew from Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the international community at the time did not acknowledge the huge amount of devastation and the political void left by the Soviets' departure, not to mention the large collection of arms they had supplied to the Mujahideen and the millions of land mines strewn across the country. In addition, because various factions had been supported by different sources outside the country, and were often pitted against each other for political gain, deep-seated hatred and fragmentation occurred within Afghanistan along tribal and ethnic lines. War was no longer confined to military personnel, but had spilled out into the population, deepening tensions and feelings of vengeance. Afghan civilians were left at the mercy these factions who fought against each other to gain power at the expense of the populace, to the point of almost completely destroying Kabul, the capital, between 1992 and 1994. Outside the capital, bandits and warlords ruled the roads and villages imposing tolls and 'taxes' at the residents' peril. Again, those who suffered most were women and children.

In 1994 a new movement began, that of the Taliban or "religious students". At first, the population welcomed them as their strict decrees brought order to the brutal chaos that had overtaken the country. But as the Taliban's laws became more and more restrictive in general and more and more brutal towards women, Afghans were once again thrown into turmoil and suffering. Many fled Taliban persecution to neighboring Pakistan and

Iran as well as to the West. In Kabul and other urban centers, the Taliban were particularly extreme in their punishments of the population as they cracked down on any apparent aspects of modernization.

Some of the Taliban's edicts were:

- ***Women and girls are not allowed to attend school.***
- ***Women are not allowed to work. (The many widows had no means of supporting themselves and their families.)***
- ***Women are not allowed to seek medical care, especially from a male doctor.***
- ***Women must wear the all-encompassing burqa outside their homes and are not allowed outside their homes without being accompanied by a close male relative.***
- ***Women must not wear shoes that make noise or wear white socks.***
- ***Women cannot wear makeup, nail polish or any kind of embellishment.***
- ***Men must wear beards at least the length of their fists.***
- ***Music, TV, movies, radio (except for religious programs) are not allowed.***

Any deviation from these rules could be punished by beating, jailing or even execution. Sharia law was interpreted to its extreme and weekly amputations and executions were required to be witnessed by the population on Fridays at the soccer stadium. Although many teachers and students defied the Taliban by running and attending secret schools, this was done at great risk. For over six years the Taliban imposed these brutal laws on the population of Afghanistan.

In October 2001, after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, U.S. Coalition forces bombed Afghanistan and with Afghan Northern Alliance forces, ousted the Taliban regime. Thousands of Afghan civilian casualties were reported, and unexploded ordnance from cluster bombs added to the peril of mines. As with the previous conflicts in Afghanistan yet another wave of refugees was created. Some 6 million Afghans comprised the largest population of refugees and internally displaced people.

On December 22, 2001 a Transitional government of Afghanistan was appointed in Bonn, Germany including two women: Dr. Sima Samar, Vice Chair and Minister of Women's Affairs and Dr. Suhaila Siddiqi as Minister of Health. Then, in June of 2002 a Loya Jirga, or Grand assembly was called and another transitional government was formed by election of a President, Hamid Karzai who then appointed a new cabinet. Afghan women were keen to participate, despite threats and intimidation by conservative elements and fundamentalists. The Loya Jirga was a major step in the establishment of a central authority in Afghanistan; however the process was fraught with controversy and accusations of intimidation by various parties. The result was seen by many Afghans to have given undue power to the "warlords" or former commanders of the Mujahideen armies. One of the fears is that human rights in Afghanistan will once again take a back seat to power struggles between these opposing factions.

Afghanistan has not been spared natural disasters either. Earthquakes have ravaged the northern parts of the country. Years of drought have decimated crops and livelihoods.

Many farmers now rely on growing the opium poppy in order to support their families. Afghanistan has gone from supplying less than 2% of the world's opium in 2001 to over 75% in 2003.

The burqa, a symbol of oppression so often shown here in the West, is not the primary concern for Afghan women, insofar as it is a garment that they may or may not choose wear. The issue is that Afghan women do not yet feel secure enough to make that choice, because they still have reason to fear for their personal safety. More importantly, this insecurity is a major impediment to their freedom of movement and full participation in public life as well as their access to basic human rights such as health care, education and employment.

The presence of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul has been a stabilizing factor within the capital, but the civilian police forces are not trained and not well paid. The central government does not yet have the resources to exercise control over areas outside the city and these remain very dangerous. The presence and continuing power of warlords in Afghanistan perpetrates the violence and oppression against women. Some still exert control in the government while others control entire provinces within Afghanistan and impose strict Taliban-type edicts on the population. The international community must ensure that the perpetrators of these human rights abuses are dealt with appropriately and prevented from imposing further suffering on Afghan women.

Education is also a major concern for Afghan women. In March 2002, the Afghan school year re-opened and girls were once again attending classes after for some, a hiatus of six years. Education is seen as a priority in empowering women in Afghanistan and as an instrument for social change. The education of women has a direct positive impact on the physical and emotional health of the family as well as on national social-economic development. Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world at 15% for women and 47% for men. Even before the wars, access to education for rural women and girls was very restricted due to limited resources and access to educational facilities, as well as cultural barriers to girls' education.

Although many Afghan children have returned to school, the educational system has only limited capacity to accommodate them. Most schools lack such basics as desks, chairs, blackboards and textbooks, and many students cannot afford necessary supplies such as pencils and notebooks. Libraries, labs and technical shops were destroyed or looted during the wars. Afghan universities are in desperate straights as well with no textbooks or computers. Thousands more teachers are needed and many of those teaching at present have not been paid or have had to get second jobs to make ends meet.

Often, families cannot afford to send older children to school because they need them to work to help support the family. In some of the more conservative areas, women and girls are not considered to require education or are actively discouraged from pursuing it. Some remnants of extremist Taliban supporters have even threatened families not to send their daughters to school and have waged attacks on the schools themselves. In most

cases the schools have reopened or classes have been continued in peoples' homes as they were in the Taliban era.

The tragedies imposed by war also mean that Afghan children will need special classes such as mine awareness. Many of them have witnessed atrocities, some against their own family members, leaving scars that may never heal.

In the area of health care the statistics are also grim. Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world at 1600 deaths per 100,000 live births (compared to less than 5 in Canada). Today, only 10-12% of Afghan women have access to health care and this number is even lower outside of the cities. Infant mortality rates are 30 times higher than in Canada and one out of every four Afghan children will die before reaching the age of 5 years. Life expectancy in Afghanistan is 44 years, compared to 82 in Canada. Many families cannot afford life-saving procedures for their children. Often medicines must be purchased on the black market at exorbitant prices. Afghan children are dying every day from preventable diseases and from mines and unexploded ordnance left over from the wars.

In addition to physical health, mental health is of extreme concern for Afghan women. In a study conducted in 1998 by Zohra Rasekh for Physicians for Human Rights, it was found that 97% of the subjects, Afghan women living in Kabul or in refugee camps in Pakistan, met the criteria for major depression. Although the situation for some women has improved and people are generally more optimistic, this perception of hope for the future will not be maintained unless some real, tangible changes to Afghan women's lives are realized soon. The implications for future generations could be very serious if this issue is not addressed.

The misinterpretation of Islam by extremists is another major concern for Afghan women. The education of women regarding their rights within Islam is seen as an important factor in ensuring Afghan women's human rights in their society. The patriarchal structure of the family in Afghan society and the attitudes of some Afghan men were identified as another barrier to women's rights. Although women's rights have been entrenched in Afghanistan's new Constitution, implementation under the rule of law has not yet occurred.

Because most women in Afghanistan face crushing poverty, few have access to education and employment opportunities which could help alleviate their situations. The lack of infrastructure - safe roads, transportation systems and even reliable communication systems - is a huge barrier to their freedom of movement and their ability to access educational facilities and training.

Fair representation in the Afghan government will be an essential part of advancing women's rights in Afghanistan. The new Afghan constitution guarantees fair representation by women in the parliament. Again, although this has been set down on paper, reality differs from the ideal: threats and intimidation against women who speak out are common in Afghan politics. The international community must make women's

human rights a high enough priority to influence the government in Afghanistan to move decisively on this issue.

While all of these problems may seem overwhelming, there has, nevertheless been a lot of good news coming out of Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban. Women's issues have played a role in the new constitution, and Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission is headed by a woman – Dr. Sima Samar. After years of being imprisoned in their homes, some women are now demanding the right to full participation in the political processes of the country. In the presidential election held in October 2004, women were active not only as voters, but there was also a female candidate.

On October 9, 2004, millions of Afghans went to the polls to cast their vote for the future President of Afghanistan. The months leading up to this momentous day were filled with uncertainty, political maneuvering, threats and incidents of violence. This first-ever democratic process was definitely fraught with controversy. However, despite the risk to their lives and families, an estimated 10 million Afghans, 43% of them women, registered to vote and demonstrated their determination to have a voice in electing the leader of their country.

We know that the reconstruction of Afghanistan is needed – not just the physical reconstruction, but the redevelopment of the actual systems that make a society function, such as the education system, the health care sector, the judicial system, etc.

In January 2006, a conference co-chaired by Afghanistan, the United Nations and the United Kingdom was held in London, England to develop a framework for the engagement of the international community in Afghanistan over the next five years. The conference was attended by members of the International community including Canada, and the resulting agreement was called the Afghanistan Compact. The Compact seeks to establish lasting Afghan capacity and effective state and civil society institutions by building up the human capacity of both men and women. Three critical areas for action were identified for the period 2006 to 2011: security; governance, the rule of law and human rights; and economic and social development. Canada pledged its full support for the Afghanistan Compact which sets out detailed outcomes, benchmarks, timelines and obligations to ensure improved coordination of efforts between the Afghan government and the International community.

What are Canadians doing? Canadians have taken a central role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The Canadian government is taking a “whole of government approach”, working closely with the Afghan government to address the unique challenges facing Afghanistan. Priorities for reconstruction and development have been set by the Afghan Government through its National Development Strategy (ANDS). In September of 2003, Canada opened an embassy in Kabul after a hiatus of 24 years when it broke off diplomatic relations with Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion in 1979.

Canada also holds responsibility for the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) which combines military, diplomatic, police and development expertise. The

Afghanistan PRT's are part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) which operates under the auspices of NATO.

As part of their engagement in Afghanistan, Canadian soldiers operate what is called a Civil-Military Cooperation Unit, which helps to funnel donations from Canada of warm clothes, books, shoes and food to needy Afghans. Canadian peacekeepers work within the communities in Afghanistan and are actively involved in building relationships with the Afghan people.

Canadian Forces are in Afghanistan as part of a UN-sanctioned mission at the request of the Afghan government. The goals of the mission are: to establish the security necessary to promote development; support the Afghan National Security Forces; help strengthen the Afghan government; facilitate the delivery of programs and projects; and assist in addressing humanitarian needs of Afghans by supporting Canadian governmental organizations and NGOs whose efforts meet Canada's objectives. Although there is some controversy amongst Canadians regarding the presence of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, evidence suggests that most Afghans, especially women, welcome their presence and dread the consequences of a complete troop withdrawal. Canadians need to decide in what capacity (i.e. combat, security, etc.) they wish to see Canadian troops operate in Afghanistan and make their thoughts known to their government representatives.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides reconstruction and development assistance in accordance with the priorities set out by the Afghan government in its National Development Framework. Through these national programs, CIDA is helping the Afghan government reach people and communities, not only in Kabul, the national capital, but across the nation. CIDA has a substantial and growing headquarters team in Canada dedicated to Afghan development programming, as well as officers based in Kabul and Kandahar. Canada's total allocation of development assistance to Afghanistan over the 2001 to 2011 period is almost \$1 billion.

For more information on the many ways Canadians are contributing to the reconstruction of Afghanistan through the Canadian government, visit:

Protecting Canadians, Rebuilding Afghanistan

<http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/menu-en.asp> and;

Canadians making a difference in Afghanistan (download PDF)

http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/pdf/Afghanistan_brochure_e.pdf

Non-governmental organizations have been providing long-term assistance to Afghanistan. Their presence is vital to fill the gap in education, health service, skills training and much more, until the government of Afghanistan is capable of providing these services.

Individual Canadians are also making a substantial difference. Sally Armstrong, award-winning human rights activist, and author was one of the first international journalists to bring the plight of Afghan women to the world's attention. Her book, *Veiled Threat, The Hidden Power of the Women of Afghanistan* demonstrates the need to provide long-term support and solidarity to Afghan women. Much help is still needed to erase the legacy of female oppression and poverty in Afghanistan, and to effectively address one of the greatest human rights crises of our times.

Another Canadian, the founder of Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, Deborah Ellis, is now internationally known for her best-selling books: *The Breadwinner*, *Parvana's Journey*, and *Mud City*. This trilogy provides young readers with a personal and heart-wrenching insight into what it has meant to be a child in Afghanistan in recent years. Deborah Ellis has donated 100% of the royalties from her books to improving the lives of Afghan women and children. These donated royalties have contributed over \$350,000 to projects for Afghan women and girls. When asked about this, Deborah writes:

“We all want to be brave; we all want to find it within us to stand up to tyranny and side with those who are being beaten down. Sometimes we look to literature to remind us of how great we can be.

The money the books have raised has put women to work, children in school, and food in people's bellies. I've been frequently astonished at how easy it is to radically improve someone's life. It's an honour to be a part of it.”

Breaking Bread for Afghan Women is a fundraising project designed by Susan Bellan in Toronto, and facilitated through Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan. It was first launched in 2002. The idea is for individual Canadians to host potluck dinners in their homes with the aim of raising \$750 per dinner – about the cost of a teacher's salary for one year in Afghanistan. Between 2002 and 2006 the Breaking Bread project has raised over \$425,000, with 355 potluck gatherings being held across Canada. Most importantly, hundreds of Afghan teachers and tens of thousands of students have benefited from this support.

Many young people have also been instrumental in raising funds for Afghan women and for raising awareness about human rights issues. ***Students for Change***, a group started by high school students from George McDougall High School in Airdrie, Alberta were winners of the 2006 Y.M.C.A. Peace Award for their humanitarian work. They were inspired to become active in social justice issues when their teacher, Glyn Hughes, made them aware of the plight of Afghan women. The students now hold an annual pot-luck dinner on International Women's Day to raise funds for women-centered programs in Afghanistan. There are many other examples of young people working towards making a difference and improving the lives of Afghan people.

All these efforts DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Securing basic human rights for Afghan women will require much long-term support both from within Afghanistan and from all of us, as members of the international community.

As teachers, you have taken a very important step in sharing this educational material with your students. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by all of us who work in solidarity towards a more peaceful and equitable world.

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan

During over two decades of war, women in Afghanistan endured extreme oppression through the denial of their basic human rights. Under the imposed rule of the extremist Taliban regime, most women and children faced severe restrictions to their freedom of movement and were denied access to basic health care, education, security and employment. As a new era of hope is entered across boundaries of gender and ethnicity in Afghanistan, much support is needed to help Afghan women mend and redefine their shattered lives.

Afghan women are currently advocating for equal and active participation in all levels of peace building and reconstruction in their country. They continue to be the best source of knowledge, experience and expertise on the issues that affect them. Afghan women are well able to assess their own needs, contrary to the prevalent perception that they are merely victims and that external agents can best discern what assistance should be provided for them.

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan) began in 1996 as a small volunteer network of women in Canada who joined with Afghan women to work together toward the goal of securing basic human rights for women across Afghanistan and by extension, their families.

We are now some thirteen volunteer chapters and affiliated groups working in solidarity across Canada.

The overall goals of CW4WAfghan are 1) to support the empowerment efforts of women in Afghanistan and the refugee camps in Pakistan, and 2) to raise awareness in Canada of the need to secure and protect human rights for Afghan women.

To support the efforts of women in Afghanistan, CW4WAfghan raises funds for projects in partnership with selected Afghan civil society grassroots organizations. These partnerships share the goals of assisting Afghan women in their struggles to end their oppression, to improve conditions of human rights, and to contribute as active members in Afghan society. Projects focus on women's education, health, refugee resettlement, employment, and women's human rights education.

Projects are funded in a variety of ways including individual donations, 'in-kind' support, and through financial partnerships with donors such as Rights and Democracy in Montreal (www.ichrdd.ca).

In Canada, CW4WAfghan has ongoing fundraising, education and advocacy projects. For more details, or to find a chapter near you, please visit our website at www.w4wafghan.ca or contact our National Office in Calgary at **CW4WAfghan, Bankview P.O. Box 32014, Calgary, AB, T2T 5X6, (403) 244-5625.**

Additional Resources

What are human rights?

Human rights are those rights that are necessary in order for us to live as human beings. Human rights give us dignity and equality. Human rights ensure that we all have adequate access to basic needs such as food and shelter. Human rights protect us from violence and abuse and work against ignorance and hatred. Human rights are inherent in all human beings and they should never be denied.

Human rights are universal. They transcend borders, cultures, political ideologies, and religious beliefs. No matter where you live in the world, who your parents are, or what kind of government you have, human rights are *your* rights.

Human rights allow us to fully develop our human abilities. They protect our right to participate in society, to work and provide for ourselves, to practice our culture and speak our language, to live in peace, and to be free from harm.

Most importantly, human rights are about respecting one another. They are about fulfilling our responsibility to ensure that no one's human rights are violated. For example, it is your right to be free from discrimination and it is your duty to not discriminate against others. When any person is denied human rights we are all affected.

Recognizing that human rights are only as strong as our willingness to treat one another as equals is the first step in achieving "freedom, justice and peace in the world".

Excerpted from: <http://www.unac.org/rights/actguide/questions.html>

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plain.asp>

FAQ on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/qna/faqudhr.asp>

Q and A on Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/qna/alston.asp>

Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Plain language version)

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plainchild.asp>

The United Nations Association in Canada

<http://www.unac.org/en/index.asp>

Web Sites

For updates to this resource, check our web site at www.w4wafghaneducation.ca

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WA)

For links to other humanitarian organizations and advocacy contact information, visit the CW4WAfghan website at www.w4wafghan.ca. This Teachers' Resource is also available in French.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

For information on what the Canadian Government is doing in Afghanistan, visit the CIDA web site: www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm

Also see:

Protecting Canadians, Rebuilding Afghanistan

<http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/menu-en.asp> and;

Canadians making a difference in Afghanistan (download PDF)

http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/pdf/Afghanistan_brochure_e.pdf

Want to know more about international development? Interested in finding how your skills can make a difference? Move your world.... because you can! Find out how on CIDA's **Youth Zone**

www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/youthzone

CIDA's **Teacher Zone** has been designed with educators in mind as a single on-line portal for high quality, curriculum-based educational resources, and new ideas to help you bring international development to the classroom.

www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/teacherzone

Arthur Kent

See short video clips about current and important issues in Afghanistan by award-winning Canadian journalist Arthur Kent at www.skyreporter.com and a series of short stories chronicling three decades of war in Afghanistan at www.ghostsandwarlords.com

Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre

www.aclrc.com

BC Teachers' Federation - Global Education

<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6214>

Canadian Human Rights Act, Canadian Human Rights Commission

www.chrc-ccdp.ca/about/human_rights_act-en.asp

Cultivating Peace

This is an excellent web site with comprehensive resources and lesson plans in peace education. www.cultivatingpeace.ca

Global Education Network

www.global-ed.org/english/Human_Rights/

Ideaccess

The Ideaccess E-library provides a comprehensive, in-depth collection of articles on women's rights, human rights and development issues. www.ideaccess.org

Lesson Planet

www.lessonplanet.com/search/Social_Studies/Human_Rights

Human Rights Watch: Afghanistan

www.hrw.org/campaigns/afghanistan/

PBS – Afghanistan Unveiled

www.pbs.org/independentlens/afghanistanunveiled/edu.html

Peaceful Schools International

www.peacefulschoolsinternational.org

ROAR – Reach Out Against Racism

www.youthroar.org

Students 4 Change

www.rockyview.ab.ca/mcdougall

World Trek - the Odyssey

www.worldtrek.org/odyssey/asia/051300/051300teamafgan.html

Other useful sites:

www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20011003wednesday.html

www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/AfghanistanLinks.htm

www.tes.co.uk/afghanistan/secondary_activities.asp?id=12551

www.dangermines.ca

www.humanrights.gov.au/info_for_teachers/index.html

Evaluation Forms

Educators and other users, in an effort to improve this resource and to keep it current with your needs, we request that you please fill in this evaluation form after using this Teachers' Resource kit.

Please mail the completed form to: **CW4WAfghan, Bankview P.O. Box 32014, Calgary, AB, T2T 5X6**. An online form is also available at: www.w4wafghaneducation.ca.

School: _____ City: _____ Province: _____

Number of classes in which this resource was used _____

Grade(s) _____ Subject(s) _____

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low
Ease of use					
Applicability to curriculum					
Interest level of students					

Through the use of this resource, do you believe that students gained a better understanding of human rights? Why or why not?

Were students motivated to take action to promote human rights or to help people less fortunate than themselves? In what way(s)?

Can you suggest ways in which this resource could be improved?

What were some of the things you liked or disliked about this resource?

Please use the back of this form for any further comments or suggestions. If you wish to receive a response, please include your contact information. Thank you for your time!

For Students: What Did You Learn?

Please answer the following questions before you complete the lessons in Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan: Canadian Students as Global Citizens:

- 1. Can you locate Afghanistan on a map of the world? **Y N**
- 2. Do you have a basic understanding of human rights? **Y N**
- 3. Do you know about the human rights crisis in Afghanistan? **Y N**
- 4. Are you aware of the work of the Canadian government to improve the human rights of Afghan people? **Y N**
- 5. Are you aware of the work of Canadian citizens to improve the human rights of Afghan people? **Y N**
- 6. Do you believe that Canadian students (you!) can help to improve the human rights of people in other countries? **Y N**
- 7. Do you believe that Canadian students (you!) can influence our government to improve human rights for people in other countries? **Y N**

After you have completed the lessons in “Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan: Canadian Students as Global Citizens” please explain what you have learned based on the above questions.

(If necessary, please use the back of this sheet) Thank you for your time!

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**Canadian Women for Women
in Afghanistan**

APPENDIX A

PRE-PRESENTATION ACTIVITY

and

***POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
SCRIPT***



Understanding Human Rights

in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens

PRE- PRESENTATION ACTIVITY

Give the students 5 to 10 minutes to write down all that they know about human rights on a blank sheet of paper. Let them know that this is a brainstorming activity, and that they are not expected to have all of the answers at this time. You may choose to gather their lists at this point, depending on the age of the class or have them turn the sheet over to take notes during the presentation. For example, for older students, you may want to use the presentation as a note-taking exercise.

After the presentation, return the lists to the students and have them add what they have learned about human rights.

POWER POINT PRESENTATION SCRIPT

1. Human rights are something that all people have.
2. Unfortunately, not all of us have access to our rights. Throughout the history of human civilization, people have not always had or even known that they had human rights. In 1948, the United Nations proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognized the “dignity and equal rights of all members of the human family”. This presentation will highlight only a few of those rights. If you would like to see the rest of the declaration, you may visit the UN website.
3. We all have the right to food, clothing, and shelter.
4. We all have the right to go to school.
5. We all have the right to live without fear. ***How many of you walked to school this morning? Were you afraid to walk to school?*** Here in Canada, we might be afraid of bullies, or big dogs, but in Afghanistan children are afraid of men with guns, of stepping on a land mine or of being kidnapped.

Can you think of other rights that we enjoy here in Canada? What about the right to earn a living? Clean drinking water? Access to doctors and medicine? These are all things we enjoy in Canada and we don't usually even think about them.

As you will discover when we do some role-playing later, many Afghans do not enjoy the rights that many of us do, and haven't for a very long time.

6. (World map) *Point out Canada, China, Iraq, and various neighbours of Afghanistan.* Because of its central location between Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean, Afghanistan is at the crossroads of a number of important trade routes. Many countries have been fighting for control of Afghanistan for centuries. In 1979, the former Soviet Union – you are probably too young to know what the Soviet Union was, so I'll call it Russia – invaded Afghanistan and for many years Afghan rebel groups tried to fight them off. The United States and other countries also provided them with guns and anti-aircraft missiles – to shoot down Soviet helicopters. In 1989 that war ended with the Russians leaving, but the Americans and the rest of the world also withdrew their support, so Afghanistan fell into a state of lawlessness, with various groups fighting for control.
7. (Map of Afghanistan) Afghanistan is about the size of Saskatchewan, with a population of about 30,000,000. That's almost the entire population of Canada living in an area that is smaller than many Canadian provinces.
8. Slides 8 and 9 – (Landscape) when you see photographs of Afghanistan on the news or in the paper, you probably see a lot of bombed out buildings, soldiers with guns, and dusty, run-down city streets. It does have those things, but in fact, Afghanistan has a beautiful and varied landscape, just as Canada does. There are mountains, foothills, dry, desert-like areas, lakes, rivers, and of course, cities.
9. Included with Slide 8.
10. Facts about Afghanistan
 - Many different countries have been fighting for control of Afghanistan for centuries
 - Because of all the fighting, many things have been destroyed. Villages, homes, and schools have been ruined
 - Afghanistan is now one of the poorest countries in the world
11. *[Point out rocket launcher, the ruins of the gates to a city which had been destroyed by bullets and rockets, and the lower pair of photographs – these were taken by an American aid worker who had lived in Afghanistan in 1975 in the beautiful home on the left. When he returned to Afghanistan in 2002, he found the bombed-out skeleton of his former home and a landscape that had been devastated by years of drought and war. Not a single flower or blade of grass remained.]*
12. Before the wars, many aspects of life in Afghanistan were very much like ours, especially in the cities:
 - Boys and girls were allowed to go to school

- Women were allowed to go out on their own and to go to work
13. Many Afghan people went to work, listened to music, watched movies, and led lives very much like ours.
 14. However, during the wars in Afghanistan, life was very hard for everyone. Many people suffered and died, and many Afghans were forced to leave their homeland and relatives. When the Taliban took over in 1996, some things got even worse, especially for women and girls.
 15. People no longer had the freedom to do what they wanted
 - Girls could not go to school. ***How many of you make a habit of complaining to your parents, “I don’t want to get up? Why do I have to go to school?” Can you imagine not being allowed to go to school? What would you do all day? [Usually a dozen hands go up and kids say “play Nintendo”, “watch T.V.”, or “play outside”, at which point we tell them that their toys and T.V. would have been taken away, and their parents wouldn’t let them play outside because it is too dangerous.]***
 - Women were not allowed to leave their homes without a close male relative. By ‘close’ they meant a husband, father, brother, or grown son – a cousin or brother-in-law would not do.
 16. (Further to slide 15)
 - Women were not allowed to work. ***How many of you have moms who go out to work?*** Well, imagine that your mom was no longer allowed to go to work, and so of course she no longer had a paycheque. It might be tough for your family to buy groceries, let alone do anything fun like take a holiday or even go to a restaurant. For many Afghan families, especially for those in which the father, husband or older sons had been killed in the war, the ban on women working meant they didn’t have enough money to buy food or shelter.
 - Music, books, and TV were banned
 - People were harshly punished if they broke the rules. And by harshly punished, I don’t mean they received a ticket or were yelled at. Many were beaten, jailed, or even killed for things that we in Canada do every day, like wearing nail polish or flying a kite.
 17. Slides 17 and 18 – Refugees:
 - People who are forced to leave their homes and go and live somewhere else are called refugees.
 - People who moved to another part of Afghanistan in an attempt to keep their families safe are called internal refugees.

- Some refugees left Afghanistan to go to neighbouring countries, such as Iran or Pakistan.

Can you imagine packing only as much as you could carry in your backpack, then walking with your family for 300km? *[teachers may want to give a local example of this distance]*. **What would you take?** Don't forget that you would have to take all the food and water that you would need for several days. **Do any of you have babies or toddlers in your family? How would you carry them? How about elderly grandparents? Would they be able to walk that far?** These are the problems that millions of Afghan people have had to face in the past 20 years.

18. (Included with Slide 17)

19. Now:

- The Taliban have been removed from power *[briefly describe the events of September 11th. The amount of detail being dictated by the ages of your students]*, but there are still many problems.
- Women have more freedom, but are still afraid for their safety. When the Taliban were first removed from power a few brave women went out in public without their burqas, but men would yell at them in the street, telling them that they were indecent and to cover up. They are also still afraid that the Taliban may regain control, as there are still people who secretly support them.

20. Girls are allowed to go to school, but many still don't because of safety concerns, lack of supplies, too few teachers or even because their families don't believe it's necessary for girls. **Why is the education of girls important, especially in a country where most of them just get married anyways?** Education is a basic human right for *everyone*, but in addition, access to education for girls is important to the whole community. Children whose mothers are educated tend to be healthier and are more likely to be educated themselves, and therefore grow up to have better jobs. Girls who attend school tend to wait until they are older to get married and have fewer, healthier babies. Unmarried women or widows who have an education are better able to find work to support their families.

21. Most people in Afghanistan believe that education is extremely important; so much so, that children and teachers are willing to walk for more than an hour to get to school, sit amongst the ruins of their destroyed classrooms, and even hold classes outside. During the time of the Taliban, teachers risked their lives running secret schools and children risked being beaten to attend them.

22. Landmines are found all over Afghanistan. **Do any of you know what landmines are?** They are bombs that are disguised as other things, and

they are meant to explode when people pick them up or step on them. In Afghanistan, children are required to go to mine school, to learn about avoiding landmines. **Who do you think put the mines there?** Various armies - Soviets, Americans, even Afghans, as a weapon against their enemies.

- People risk their lives to remove the mines so that other people will not be injured. There are still 10 million land mines in Afghanistan. It costs between \$300 and \$1000 to remove *one* landmine.
- **There are no land mines in Canada, but if there was even a rumor that there was a land mine in your garden or playground, would you feel comfortable going there? How do you think Afghan farmers feel about going out to grow food in their fields or grazing their animals in areas where there might be land mines?**
- **Who do the land mines hurt the most?** Ordinary people like you and me. People just going about their daily business. Some landmines are even designed to be small and smooth, and painted in bright colours to resemble toys.

23. The Future:

- Rebuilding Afghanistan will take many years and a lot of help from the rest of the world. **Who do think should help to rebuild Afghanistan?**

24. Canadians making a difference:

- Through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Canada has been one of the leading countries in contributing money to reconstruction in Afghanistan.
- The money has been sent to the Afghan government and to aid organizations, especially those helping women and children.
- Canada has also sent people – experts to help with things like setting up a Justice system, a police force and running elections. **Who else has Canada sent to help in Afghanistan?**

25. Canadian Peacekeepers:

- Canadian Peacekeepers have been helping to keep the people of Afghanistan safe from terrorists and remnants of the Taliban. They have also helped to train Afghanistan's own army to keep the peace in Afghanistan.
- Our peacekeepers also help to distribute donated goods to the Afghan people.

- The people of Afghanistan are very glad to have the peacekeepers in their country, so that they can concentrate on rebuilding and getting on with their lives.

26. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs):

- Aid organizations or NGOs are hard at work in Afghanistan, helping to rebuild the country, running schools and medical clinics and helping Afghan women and men to start small businesses. These organizations help the Afghan people to make the most of the donations that people send to them. Someday, hopefully, most of these things will be done by the government of Afghanistan.

27. Who else can help?

- So, governments and international aid agencies can help, but what about regular people like us? ***Do you think that you are too young to help the people of Afghanistan?*** This little girl, who is nine, organized a potluck dinner to raise money to pay the salary of an Afghan teacher for one year. She raised \$750. Another child who is seven, made homemade Christmas gift labels, sold them for \$3 a sheet and raised \$110 dollars for a girls' orphanage in Afghanistan. Many school kids have written us to say that they have had bake sales, sold homemade comic books, or taken up a collection of loonies at school to help the people of Afghanistan.
- ***Aside from raising money, what are some other ways in which you can help the people of Afghanistan?*** You can tell your parents and other people what you learned about Afghanistan today, or you may want to write to the Prime Minister or your Member of Parliament asking them to keep the promises they've made to help rebuild Afghanistan. If someone in your class is a refugee from Afghanistan, or from anywhere in the world, you can be nice to them and help them to adjust to their new life in Canada.

28. Conclusion:

- Rebuilding Afghanistan will be neither quick, nor easy. It is our hope that in the next ten years, the children in this picture will have graduated from high school, perhaps gone on to university and found jobs, and that when they have children of their own, those children will never experience the fear, hunger, and oppression that their parents knew.

Further Explorations and Questions

Why didn't the Taliban want children to go to school? Why wouldn't they want people to be educated? How can someone who is educated be "dangerous" to groups like the Taliban?

The Taliban wanted children - and only boy children - to learn only the things that they believed in, not anything about the outside world. People who are educated about many things are more able to decide for themselves what they do or do not believe. The Taliban wanted people to believe only them, so they would have control over everyone.

People who are educated know what their human rights are and would be more likely to resist abuse. The Taliban wanted people to be desperate and frightened so that they would be more likely to listen to their orders.

People who are educated would be better equipped to start a resistance movement and to organize themselves against the Taliban. They would also be more likely to contact the outside world to get help.

Why did the Taliban target women especially? Why wouldn't they want women to be involved in society?

The Taliban, like anyone who craves power, wanted to control the people. By using their interpretation of religion and imposing it on Afghan men, they were able to control the women of Afghanistan. That meant that, relatively easily, they had control of over half the population of the country. The men would be busy fighting, and the women would be oppressed, so that no one would have the ability to oppose them.

Also, educated women would have more independence and influence over their family members and might be able to convince their husbands and sons not to follow the Taliban.

Do you think everyone in Canada has equal access to their human rights? Does everyone have enough to eat, a safe place to live, access to a good education, to a job?

Unfortunately, the fact is that even in Canada, one of the best places in the world to live, not everyone has equal access to their basic human rights. Many children go to school hungry, or don't have a safe place to live. We need to be constantly aware of our rights and of how easily they can be taken away from us. We need to speak out on behalf of others who are less fortunate than we are and do our best to help them.

What are some examples of instances in Canada's history (or the present) when people were deprived of their rights?

Aboriginal people in Canada have been fighting for their basic human rights for many years. From about 1874 to 1974, many Aboriginal children were taken away from their families and forced to go and live in “residential schools” where they were forbidden to speak in their native languages and were sometimes treated very poorly. Only since 1967, have aboriginal people been allowed to vote in elections.

During the Second World War, Japanese-Canadians were forced out of their homes, which were given or sold to someone else and were sent to internment camps for the duration of the war. The men were sent to work in road camps while the women and children were forced to move to small towns in the interior of British Columbia. All of them lived under terrible conditions. These families have received some financial compensation for what they lost, but nothing will ever be enough to make up for the pain, sorrow and loss that they had to endure. There are other examples (the Acadians, for example) that can be researched.

What year did Canadian women become “persons” as far as the government was concerned? In what year were women granted the right to vote in Canada?

Women were not considered to be “persons” in Canada, and so did not have the right to take part in government or to be judges, until 1929. After a long battle, women finally won the right to vote in all of Canada’s provinces by 1940.

Are women in Canada always treated equally to men, even now? What is the percentage of women in the Canadian Parliament? Do you think women have an equal voice to that of men in Canada?

Women’s salaries are still not up to par with men’s in Canada; there are far fewer women executives than men. Our latest parliament (2004) consists of only 21% women. Canada is rated 36th in the world in terms of the percentage of women we have in our parliament compared to other countries.

Do you think Afghan women are now “liberated” because the U.S. – led Coalition removed the Taliban from power by force? What problems still exist?

Just because the Taliban are no longer in power, doesn’t mean that conditions for Afghan women have gotten completely better. Many of the people who abused women’s human rights are still in power and many of the conditions that caused ordinary Afghans to suffer still exist. There is no electricity in many places, no suitable roads, not enough food and shelter; there are still many men with guns and no police to protect the people; there are not enough courts, judges or lawyers to settle disputes; women are still being abused, married against their wishes, not allowed any freedom by their husbands; and most importantly, there are not enough women in positions of power so that they can speak for other Afghan women. The world has a lot of work left to do in

Afghanistan to help rebuild the country and to educate the people so that they can help themselves.

Is it right for outside countries to support one side or the other in a conflict or to forcibly remove one leader and replace him/her with another? What sorts of problems could arise?

When one country interferes in the affairs of another, all kinds of problems can arise, because it is very difficult to know what will happen after a war. Also, the invading country usually has its own interest or its own “agenda” in mind when it goes into another country. For example, they may want more control over that country’s natural resources – oil, water, etc... The use of force in any situation usually leads to a violent reaction by the person or country being attacked. Balances may be upset, starting a civil war; one group may come out ahead and start abusing the human rights of another group; the government that the invading country installs may be worse than the one they got rid of, and so on. Is it right for one country to go into another, start a war, change the government and then leave? If a country chooses to participate in a war, should they be prepared to participate in the peace afterwards, even if it costs a lot of money?

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan

APPENDIX B

INTERACTIVE CARD GAME



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens

PREPARATION FOR INTERACTIVE CARD GAME

Suggested materials:

- White card stock – 17 sheets
- White paper – 4 sheets
- 1 sheet adhesive labels (30 per sheet)
- 17 envelopes at least 4” by 6”

1. Download and print “Character Cards”, preferably in colour, on white card stock.
2. Cut cards apart and sort by colour and number. Ideally, the cards should be laminated so that they can be used again.
3. Download and print 4 copies of “Human Rights Charts” (regular paper is fine). Cut out the individual charts.
4. Download and print “Character Card Labels”, preferably in colour, on an adhesive label sheet.
5. Affix each label to an envelope and place each set of cards in an envelope along with one Human Rights Chart.
6. Download and print “Answer Cards”, preferably in colour, on white card stock. Cut cards apart, laminate if desired and place in the envelope labeled with “Answer Cards”.



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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHARACTER CARD ACTIVITY

TIME: approx. 1 hour

SUPPLIES: Game card envelopes containing Character cards and Human rights charts; Answer cards; pen or pencil for each team.

- For this activity, the students will need to be ready to use their imaginations!
- Ask the students: When you are born, do you get to choose what your life is going to be like? Do you get to decide, for example:
 - Whether you will be a boy or a girl?
 - Which country you will be born in?
 - Whether you will be rich or poor?
- Let the students know that this activity is a bit like that: who they end up being is pretty much a matter of chance.
- Tell the students to partner up and give each team an envelope marked with a colour and a number, but ask them not to open the envelope YET!
- Designate an area of the classroom for each colour, keeping in mind that the “red” group will be quite large.
- Send the students to the designated parts of the room, according to the colour on their envelope.
- Explain to the students that in each of these envelopes is the story of an Afghan person’s life. Although the stories have been made up, they are based on *real things* that have happened to *real people* in Afghanistan. Ask them to use their imaginations to try to put themselves in that Afghan person’s place.
- Explain that inside the envelope, they will find two or more cards with the number of their group, a name and a year, such as “#1 Asif - 1994”. Each



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card describes their character's life during that particular year in Afghanistan. As they read the cards, ask them to keep in mind which year it is and that their ages will change as the years go by!

- **1994** represents the time in Afghanistan before the Taliban took power.
- **1996** is the year the Taliban came into power. They were in power for 6 years.
- **Present** is now, after the defeat of the Taliban.
- **The last card** is a human rights chart for them to fill in.
- **Ask the students** to take turns reading the cards to their partners and to listen for clues as to whether or not their character has access to the basic human rights you've talked about and that are listed on their charts.
- **Students then need** to fill in their human rights charts – they may need to use deductive reasoning, as not all answers are given in so many words.
- **When they have finished** filling in the human rights, they need to add up the stars in each column and record the total number of stars in the row marked "TOTAL".
- **Students may then go** and ask the instructor for an answer card and compare their answers to those on the card. If their answers are different, students should try to figure out why that might be. In some cases, they needed to use deductive reasoning to reach the correct answer; in others, their answers may be just as valid as those on the answer card, provided they are backed up with sound reasoning.

DISCUSSION:



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- 1. What changes did you notice in Afghans' access to human rights after the Taliban came to power? Was there a difference for men as opposed to women?*
- 2. Do you think what happened to the women in Afghanistan was fair?*
- 3. What similarities did you notice between Afghan people and yourselves?*
- 4. Did you see any similarities between the people described in this activity and the people in Deborah Ellis' book "The Breadwinner"?*
- 5. How do you think you would feel if some of your basic human rights were taken away?*
- 6. Can you think of ways that we, as Canadians might be able to help Afghan women and children regain access to their human rights?*
- 7. Use the statistics you gathered about human rights for each colour group to make charts and compare their human rights. Which groups had greater access to which human rights? Why?*

NOTE TO TEACHERS:

The activity cards are designed to reflect the demographics as well as to illustrate important aspects of life and human rights in Afghanistan. The cards describe a total of 16 characters and can accommodate a class size of 32. For smaller classes, you may wish to remove some of the characters, beginning with #1 YELLOW (i.e. for 30 students); then #4 RED (28 students); and finally #10 RED (26 students). For classes smaller than 26 students, we suggest you simply assign one student to some of the characters instead of two.

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan

APPENDIX C

CHARACTER ANALYSES



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan Canadian Students as Global Citizens

Character Analyses

Asif (pronounced A - seef) #1 Blue card

Ask the student who represents Asif to raise her/his hand.

Ask the student who has Asif's character:

- What did Asif and his wife do for a living in 1994?
(*Asif was a doctor and his wife was a social worker*).
- To what human rights did Asif have access, relative to the average Canadian?
(*He had the same rights that most of us have: Food, clean water, access to education and health care, a home*).
- What sort of luxuries did Asif have?
(*T.V., phone, car, holidays*).
- What did Asif do when the Taliban gained power in Afghanistan in 1996?
(*He left Afghanistan and took his family to England*).

Question to class: Why do you think there is only one blue character?

Answer: Because Asif is wealthy, and in Afghanistan as in most of the world, only a small percentage of the people are wealthy. In Afghanistan, even today, the majority of people live in what we would consider poverty, especially in rural areas where there is no electricity or running water.

Question to class: How many of your characters left Afghanistan in 1996 and went overseas?

Answer: Only Asif

Question to class: Why do you think Asif was the only one who did that?

Answer: Because he was the only one who could afford to. It is very expensive to arrange transportation for a family of five and to provide a home for them once they arrive.

Question to class: Why do you think Asif felt it was necessary to leave?

Answer: One of the reasons may have been that the Taliban persecuted many educated people. The Talibs were, for the most part, uneducated young men. They felt that educated people were a threat to their authority, and might persuade others to rebel, as well.

- Ask the student what sort of work Asif and his wife do in England.
(*He works in a factory and his wife is a housekeeper in a hotel*)

Question to class: Do you think that Asif and his family enjoy the same standard of living in England as they did in Afghanistan?

Answer: *No. Sadly, it is very difficult for professionals from other countries to gain recognition for their education and experience in their new country. Many of them take whatever jobs they can get in order to support their families.*

Ask the student:

- Where do Asif and his family live now?
(*They've moved to Canada*).
- Does Asif plan to stay in Canada?
(*Asif and his wife would like to return to Afghanistan, but it will take them years to save enough money, and their children don't want to leave*)

To the class: *This is a very common scenario for many families who have been forced to leave their home countries. The parents aren't always able to work in the jobs for which are trained, they are forced to take lower paying jobs, and their children become accustomed to the lifestyle of their new country and don't want to leave.*

Asif also mentions that his relatives are scattered all over the world and they may never be together again. This is especially hard on Afghan families, as family ties are of the utmost importance to them. Ask the students to raise their hands if they have cousins that they hardly ever see, or whom they don't know very well – a few hands will go up. This situation is almost non-existent in Afghanistan, where extended families members are very close.

Mariam #1 Green card

Ask the student who represents Mariam to raise her/his hand.

Ask the student who has Mariam's character:

- What did Mariam do for a living in 1994?
(*Mariam was a math teacher.*)
- To what human rights did Mariam have access, relative to the average Canadian?
(*She had the same rights that most of us have: Food, clean water, access to education and health care, the right to earn a living, a home*).
- What kinds of things did Mariam and her family enjoy doing?
(*Having friends and family over to share meals and watch videos.*)

- When the Taliban gained power in 1996, what were some of the things Mariam could no longer do?
(*Mariam couldn't teach school or go outside without her husband. She could not go to see a doctor or leave the house without a close male relative.*)

Question to class: Why do you think the Taliban wanted to stop women from working or going out?

Answer: *The Taliban felt that women had gained too much freedom and education in the previous two decades, especially under Soviet occupation. For the most part, the Taliban were uneducated, often illiterate young men and they distorted their religious teachings to support their position against the rights of women.*

- What fears does Mariam have after 1996 that she didn't have before that?
(*She is afraid to send her children to a secret school; she is afraid for the health of her unborn baby; and she is afraid that the Taliban might take away her teenage son and daughter.*)

Question to class: Do most of us in Canada have those sorts of fears?

Answer: No.

- What about now – is Mariam still in Kabul?
(*One wall of Mariam's house was destroyed, presumably by a rocket, but no one was hurt and the family had nowhere to go, so they stayed in the house.*)
- Has Mariam gone back to work?
(*She has gone back to work, but doesn't receive her pay regularly. Bombs destroyed her school, so the kids have classes outside.*)
- Do they have enough school supplies?
(*No, but they have received a donation from some school kids in Canada to buy more supplies.*)

Question to class: What do you think you and other kids could do to help school kids in Afghanistan?

Answer: (*Allow the students to use their imaginations, letting them know that even a small contribution can make a big difference in the lives of Afghan children.*)

Note to teachers: see Appendix D: Suggestions for Action.

Ahmed (pronounced Aw – med or Awk-med) #2 Green card

Ask the student who represents Ahmed to raise her/his hand.

Ask the student who has Ahmed's character:

- What did Ahmed do for a living in 1994?
(Ahmed was a University professor.)
- To what human rights did Ahmed have access, relative to the average Canadian?
(He had the same rights that most of us have: Food, clean water, access to education and health care, a home).
- What was one major difference between the city that Ahmed lived in and any Canadian city?
(Rockets were often heard falling on Kabul.)

Question to class: Which human right is being violated by the fact that rockets often fell on Kabul?

Answer: Security – feeling safe in going about one's daily life. Because of the continuous fighting between the different groups to gain control of the city, Afghans living in Kabul were under the constant threat of being killed by a rocket, gunfire or land mines.

- When the Taliban gained power in 1996, why did Ahmed and his family leave to go to a refugee camp in Pakistan?
(He left Afghanistan for the safety of his daughters – he had six daughters.)

Question to class: Why do you think Ahmed and his family would feel they had to leave for the safety of his daughters?

Answer: The Taliban were very brutal towards women and girls. They would sometimes take young girls away from their families and sell them, or take them as wives. Many were never heard from again. Also girls were not allowed to go to school or to go out of the house if they were teenagers.

- In the refugee camp, did Ahmed and his family have access to food, water, health care and education, like they did in Kabul?
(No, they had very little access to these rights.)
- After the Taliban left and Ahmed and his family moved back to Kabul, what did they find had happened to their house?
(Someone had taken over their house so they had to move into a small apartment).

To the class: This is not an uncommon occurrence in Afghanistan. Often, when people were forced to flee their homes they had to do so in a hurry and did not have time to obtain all their official documents. Other people might later move into the unoccupied house and claim it as their own by falsifying documents.

- Are Ahmed's wife and daughters able to walk in the streets without their burqas?
(No).

Question to class: Can anyone think of reasons why many of the women in Afghanistan still wear the burqa in public, even though the Taliban are no longer in power?

Answer: *There are many reasons. Some fear reprisal later on, if the Taliban regain control of the country. Some may have been yelled at by men in the street and accused of being indecent for going out in public uncovered. Some may simply feel too conspicuous (like they stand out too much) without the burqa. Here in Canada we may think it's odd that people think we are indecent just in our regular clothes, but imagine if you were living in a society in which you never saw women out in public wearing just their street clothes. If you did see a woman in the marketplace and she wasn't covered, it would be like someone here in Canada going grocery shopping in her bikini. We may not yell at her, but we certainly would not approve.*

Malalai (pronounced Ma'- la - lie) #3 Yellow card

Ask the student who represents Malalai:

- How old was Malalai in 1994?
(She was twelve).
- How does her family make a living?
(Her father sells vegetables at the market and her brother works for UNICEF).
 - Do she and her family live in the city or in the country?
(They live in a village near Kabul).
- So do you think they are rich or poor?
(Neither one. They have a nice house, presumably enough to eat, and some access to safe drinking water).
- Does Malalai go to school?
(Yes).

Ask the student who has Malalai's character:

- Do Malalai and her family leave their home when the Taliban come into power in 1996?
(Yes, they go to Kabul)
- Why do they leave their home?
(Because the Taliban took over their house.

This was fairly common. The Taliban would enter a village and set up headquarters in one of the larger or nicer homes. They would also kill whatever animals they needed for food and take anything they felt they ‘needed’ from the villagers).

- Did Malalai’s brother go with the rest of the family?
(No. He went to Pakistan).

Question to class: Malalai’s brother spoke English. So, based on what we discussed regarding Asif, why do you think Malalai’s brother felt that he had to leave Afghanistan?

Answer: Because people who spoke English were assumed to be educated, and therefore a target of the Taliban.

- What happened to Malalai’s father in the marketplace?
(He was beaten for selling vegetables to a woman who was out alone).

Question to class: Why would he have been beaten for that? After all, he wasn’t the one out where he shouldn’t be.

Answer: Because the Taliban would punish anyone who ignored their edicts, or rules. Not only women were affected by the Taliban’s harsh fundamentalism (briefly explain fundamentalism, if necessary).

Men had to follow strict rules regarding the way they dressed – they were not allowed to wear a suit and tie because it was considered a western, non-Afghan image. They were also forced to grow beards, which had to be of a minimum length. If a man’s beard were not long enough, he would be beaten. A man could also be imprisoned or beaten for not enforcing the Taliban’s edicts in his own home. He could not allow his wife or older daughters to leave the house with wearing a burqa and without proper male accompaniment; he could not have any books in his home, other than religious texts, and he could not allow his female children to go to school.

- After the Taliban were removed from power, were Malalai and her family able to return to their home?
(They walked back to their village, but only found a large hole where their house had been bombed, so they walked back to Kabul.)

Question to class: Why do you think Malalai’s home would have been the target of a bomb?

Answer: Because it had become a Taliban headquarters.

Even just the rumour that the Taliban were in an area could have caused that area to be a target of the Northern Alliance.

- Did Malalai go back to school?
(Yes, but she is the oldest student in her grade eight class).
- How did Malalai feel about being the eldest in her class?
(She was embarrassed).

After the Taliban were ousted from power, many girls wanted to go back to school but were prevented from doing so due to lack of schools, a shortage of school supplies and teachers, lack of security, or because of their age. How would you feel if you had to go to class with children who were up to six years younger than you?

Fatima (pronounced Fah'- tee -mah) #6 Red card

Ask the student who represents Fatima to raise her/his hand.

Ask the student who has Fatima's character:

- Fatima says that she is one of the oldest people around. How old is she?
(Fatima is 64).

Question to class: Do you think age 64 is old? How many of you have grandparents who are older than 64? In Canada, the life expectancy of the average person is over 80. That means that most of us will probably live to be 80. In Afghanistan the average life expectancy is only 46, so Fatima is indeed considered to be elderly. How many of you have parents who are over 40? Imagine that most people in Afghanistan will not live to be much older than your parents.

Why do you think that the life expectancy Afghanistan is so low? It could be due to war, the famine caused by war, drought, or lack of adequate housing and medical care.

Ask the student:

- Is Fatima's family rich or poor?
(Poor.)
- Do they have enough food to eat and clean water to drink?
(Not always).
- Where do Fatima and her family go in 1996 and why?
(They leave Kabul because they are afraid that rockets will hit their building. They go to a refugee camp in Pakistan).
- And are conditions better or worse for them in the refugee camp?
(Conditions are worse for them in the refugee camp. They all have to live in one small tent, they had to sell Fatima's prosthetic leg to pay for transportation to the camp, and they don't have enough to eat or drink).

To the class: Many men, women, and children lost limbs to landmines during the time of Soviet occupation, civil war, and Taliban rule over Afghanistan. Sadly, landmines will endanger the lives of Afghans for many decades to come. Prosthetic limbs are very expensive and during the Taliban rule it was not uncommon for families to sell the prosthetic limbs of their women. They thought that the women wouldn't need them, since women weren't allowed to work or leave their homes, anyhow.

- What happened to Fatima in the camp?
(She caught pneumonia and died, because the doctor had too many patients to see and couldn't get to her in time).

To the class: This type of scenario was a reality for millions of Afghans for over a decade, and sadly, still remains that way for many. Life in a refugee camp is extremely difficult. There is never enough food and clean water for everyone in the camps to maintain their health. Access to health care is limited due to an insufficient number of doctors, nurses, hospital beds, proper equipment, and medicine. Entire families must live together in very small tents with no water, electricity, or adequate heating and cooking equipment. It is easy to see how a person's health could deteriorate very quickly in such circumstances, and how it isn't uncommon to die from what we here in Canada see as easily curable illnesses.

Parvana (pronounced Par - vah'-nah) #10 Red card

Ask the student who represents Parvana to raise her/his hand.

Ask the student who has Parvana's character:

- To what rights does Parvana have access?
(She usually has enough food to eat and clean water to drink, but she does not have access to education or security).

Question to class: Those of you in the red group, raise your hand if you have access to fresh water. Enough to eat? Security? Education?

You can see that even within one group there is a lot of diversity in terms of their access to human rights.

- What happened to Parvana's family in 1996?
(Her father was arrested and Parvana had to dress like a boy and she and her brother had to go out and earn money for their family).

Some of you may have read Deb Ellis' "Breadwinner" series, in which a girl named Parvana has to dress like a boy to support her family. In the book, Parvana's father is also arrested. During the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and before that, during the time of the Soviet occupation and Mujahideen rule, many people were arrested for holding a point of view that was different from the government's. In

fact, even now, in countries all over the world the same thing happens every day. Can you name some of the countries in which this happens?

NOTE to teacher: depending on the age of the students and the countries they have studied, please advise them as to other countries that are ruled by such repressive regimes.

- What about Parvana's mother? How is she coping with the difficulties in her life? *(She is very sad. Parvana's aunt says that she is depressed).*

To the class: Due to the overwhelming difficulties in their lives, many people in Afghanistan suffer from depression. A study conducted in 2002 in Afghanistan showed that 70% of people in Afghanistan displayed symptoms of clinical depression. Women and disabled people showed the worst signs of depression. Depression can make a person feel exhausted, sad, joyless, and hopeless. Can you imagine a society in which more than half of all adults feel this way?

- After the Taliban were removed from power, did things go back to normal for Parvana? *(No. Her father has not yet been released from prison and Parvana and her brother continue to work as tea boys to support their family).*
- Does the family have any other means of support? *(Yes. Their aunt and young cousin moved in with them after their uncle died. The aunt now works for a non-governmental agency).*
- Is Parvana's mother feeling better, now? *(Parvana's mother still looks sad a lot).*

It takes a great deal of time, counseling, and sometimes medication to overcome depression. Do you think Parvana's mother has access to any of these things? Another mental illness that many Afghans suffer from is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is an illness that affects people after they have been through an emotional upheaval such as war, natural disaster, an accident, or an act of violence. It isn't just the physical effects of war that people have to deal with in the years after the conflict is over. There are emotional scars that need to heal, too. Sadly, the millions of Afghan people who suffer from depression or post-traumatic stress disorder have little access to adequate counseling and medication.

**Canadian Women for Women
in Afghanistan**

APPENDIX D

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION!



**Understanding Human Rights
in Afghanistan**

Canadian Students as Global Citizens



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan *Canadian Students as Global Citizens*

Suggestions for Action

Spread the word!

Raising awareness about human rights is one of the most important things we can do to help those who don't have access to their rights. Talk about human rights to your friends and family. Tell them about what is happening in Afghanistan and how important it is that we help people who don't have access to their human rights.

Write letters!

Send a letter to the Canadian Prime Minister saying how important you think it is that we continue to help the people of Afghanistan. The government needs and wants to know what you think, even if you are not old enough yet to vote. Letter writing is an excellent way to make your thoughts known. Every letter that you write counts as 100 letters because the government estimates that out of every 100 people who have a certain opinion, only 1 person will bother to write to them. You can also send a copy of your letter to your Member of Parliament so that she/he knows what's important to the people in that she/he represents. The Prime Minister's email address is: pm@pm.gc.ca. Visit the web site of the Federal Government to find the email address of your M.P. at www.parl.gc.ca. A hand-written letter can be even more effective as it shows that you've put that much more effort into writing it – plus there's no postage charged if you are writing to the government!

Send a post card!

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan have printed post cards asking the Canadian government to continue supporting Afghan women and children by sending peacekeeping troops and aid money. Your teacher can contact CW4WAfghan and ask us to send enough post cards for your whole class.

Raise funds!

Fundraising can be a very satisfying activity, especially when you know that the money you raise will be used for a great cause. Even a small amount of money can make a big difference to someone's life in Afghanistan. Because Afghanistan is so far away, the best thing to send is money (as opposed to actual goods that need to be shipped). Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan will make sure that the money gets to where it is needed most and is put to good use helping Afghan people. There are also many other great organizations that will help to get your money to Afghanistan. There are many fun ways to raise money for a good cause: a penny or looney drive at your school, a used book sale, a bake sale, a bottle drive – use your imagination, talk to your parents or teacher about your idea, then go for it! **For more ideas, visit www.w4wafghan.ca.**

Create a weblog/online journal

Let others in on what you know about human rights and the situation in Afghanistan. **Don't think you know anything?** You know a lot more than you did a few days ago, and you probably know more than many Canadians about human rights abuses in Afghanistan and other parts of the world.

Here are some ideas for your weblog:

- Over the course of several days, take away your own privileges one by one and describe in the experience in your blog. For example, on day one stop using electronics (except for your blog entries, of course). On day two, start boiling all your drinking water. On day three, don't read anything that isn't religious material. On day four, don't make or listen to any kind of music. Continue to deny yourself different privileges for the next few days. Explain how your experience did or did not trigger empathy with those who don't get to choose their own rights and privileges.
- Find fabulous photos of Afghanistan for your blog at www.lukepowell.com.
- Read one or more books from Deborah Ellis' The Breadwinner series and post a review.
- Create a piece of art expressing your perspective on human rights and/or what you've learned about Afghanistan. Post a photo of your piece along with an artist's statement on its meaning.
- Watch the movies "Kandahar" or "Osama" and post a review.
- Follow the news of Canada's military in Afghanistan in the news media or on the Department of National Defense website at http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/home_e.asp. Post your opinion about the Canadian military's role in Afghanistan.
- Invite feed back from other young people interested in international human rights issues. Exchange ideas as to what can be done in your community and elsewhere to raise awareness of international human rights.

Don't know how to create your own blog? Some blog hosts offer free hosting services, as well as step by step instructions on creating your own blog. The link below will take you to a review of free blog hosts.

<http://weblogs.about.com/od/weblogsoftwareandhosts/a/topfreeblogs.htm>

For a more in-depth lesson on blogging, try the free online tutorial at

<http://weblogs.about.com/c/ec/2.htm>

Once you have a blog, here are tips on increasing the quality of, and traffic to your blog

<http://mydiary.net/News/53858-7-Tips-for-Successful-Blogging.asp>

Important note: don't forget to practice safe blogging!

Safe Blogging Tips for Teens (from blogsafety.com)

- **Avoid postings that could enable a stranger to locate you.** That includes your last name, the name of your school or sports teams, the town you live in and where you hang out.
- **Check to see if your blogging service has a "friends" list that allows you to control who can visit your blog.** If so, be sure to allow only people you know and trust. Be very careful before adding strangers to your list and be extremely careful about the information you post that can be accessed by people outside your friends list.
- **Avoid getting together with someone you "meet" through a blog** unless you are certain of their actual identity. If you do meet them, arrange the meeting in a public place and bring some friends along.
- **Be very careful about photographs you put on your blog.** It's best to avoid photos that can make it easy for people to recognize you. It's a very bad idea to post photos that are suggestive or sexual in nature. Before uploading a photo, ask how you would feel if that picture were seen by your parents, a college admissions counselor, a potential employer, a future boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse or, perhaps, your grandparents. What if you were to run for office someday? What you post on the Internet can be downloaded by others and can hang around forever.
- **Avoid postings that could embarrass you, your friends or family members now or later.** Remember, what you post on your blog can be copied and stored and could come back to haunt you years later.
- **If you allow non-friends or strangers to post comments to your blog, check the comments regularly to make sure they're appropriate and, if not, remove them.** Never allow messages that are mean, threatening or embarrassing to you or others. Never respond to such messages either. Just delete them and, if possible, block that person from visiting your blog.
- **Do not lie about your age when you sign up for a blog.** Age limitations are there for a good reason. Claiming that you are older than you are could get you into trouble and put you at risk.

For more information about blogging and Internet safety, visit BlogSafety.com and SafeTeens.com.

Write a letter to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan at:

President Hamid Karzai
c/o Embassy of Afghanistan
246 Queen Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5E4

Encourage President Karzai to publicly speak out in protest of violence against women, to increase security for girls attending school in Afghanistan, and to work to ensure the safety of all NGO workers in Afghanistan.

Get connected with other youth activists:

Justice4Youth was established in 1999 by some Calgary youth that wanted to educate their peers about their rights as well as more about the issues that contributed to youth crime, youth rights, and young peoples' lives in general.

<http://www.justice4youth.com/main/index.php>

Rock Against Racism (RAR) is a collaborative effort of community organizations in Calgary to bring awareness to anti-racism initiatives through music, culture, and dialogue. It is presented by the Committee on Race Relations and Cross Cultural Understanding and [Youth Reach Out Against Racism](#).

Youth Reach Out Against Racism is a group of youth between the ages of 14 and 24 who are concerned about the presence of racism and prejudice in our society and wish to work for a positive change towards tolerance and understanding among people of different cultures:

<http://www.rockagainstracism.ca/main.html>

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of “ordinary” people who work together to help protect - individuals and communities around the world whose human rights are under attack.

Amnesty International encourages and supports youth activism through the Youth & Student Program:

http://www.amnesty.ca/youth/youth_action_toolkit/

Mines Action Canada seeks to bring humanity one step closer to peace and social justice by eliminating the impacts of victim-activated weapons (landmines) and restoring the rights and dignity of affected individuals and communities:

<http://www.dangermines.ca/site/index.cfm?fuseaction=Start>

**Canadian Women for Women
in Afghanistan**

*Detailed Curriculum Connections
for Alberta*



**Understanding Human Rights
in Afghanistan**

Canadian Students as Global Citizens



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan

Canadian Students as Global Citizens

Connections to Alberta Learning Social Studies Curriculum

Grade Four

Knowledge objectives:

- The availability and use of natural resources affects people and their environment. *(The presentation and question and answer session contain discussion as to how drought, lack of clean drinking water, and a decrease in arable farmland have affected the people of Afghanistan and how the same conditions might affect Albertans.)*

Locating/Organizing/Interpreting Information:

- Identify possible sources of information.
- Acquire information by reading, viewing, and listening to find the main idea and supporting details.
- Use computer programs to assist in the study of specific content areas. *(A list of recommended books, articles, and websites is provided, as is a PowerPoint presentation to be used by the teacher.)*

Geography/Mapping:

- Use and interpret maps of Alberta.
- Locate and describe major geographical regions and special geographical features such as lakes, rivers, mountain ranges and cities.
- Compare distances in kilometers to places under study.
- Identify cardinal and intercardinal directions, using the direction finder. *(A map of Alberta, comparing it to a map of Afghanistan, is included in the lesson plans; the landscape of Alberta is discussed in the PowerPoint presentation.)*

Communication Skills:

- Use simple illustrations, charts, and graphs to support written work. *(A Venn diagram activity and a backpack illustration activity are included in the lesson plans; human rights chart activities are included in the role-playing game and in the lesson plans.)*

Participation Skills:

- Make meaningful contributions to discussions, supporting ideas with facts and reasons.
- Participate in a small group discussion or activity by following established rules.
- Contribute to various functions of group work as recorder, reporter, or leader. *(Students will interact in large and small groups during the role-playing game; students will fulfill the roles of recorder and reporter in the game; the presentation is intended to engage the students in discussion as well as listening and viewing.)*

Grade Five

Knowledge Objectives:

- Exploration and settlement cause groups to have influence on each other, resulting in changes in the ways people live.
(Throughout the kit the historical importance of Afghanistan's geographical location and the influence that other cultures have had on its people is addressed; the students can compare the Afghan influences to those that immigrant cultures have had on Canadian society.)

Locating/Organizing/Interpreting Information:

- Acquire information on a specific topic by reading, skimming, listening and viewing.
- Gather information by interpreting relationships and drawing inferences from graphs, pictures, charts, pictures, and atlases.
- Distinguish between fact and fiction.
- Organize information by using different types of graphs, charts, and/or diagrams.
- Use computer programs to assist in the study of specific content areas.
- Gather information by identifying time and place relationships; identifying cause-effect relationships; calculating the length of time between two given dates; and using definite time concepts, such as decade and century.
(A list of recommended books, articles, and websites is provided, as is a PowerPoint presentation to be used by the teacher; a Venn diagram activity and a backpack illustration activity are included in the lesson plans; human rights chart activities are included in the role-playing game and in the lesson plans; students learn facts about Afghanistan through the fictional characters in the role-playing game; the passage of time is clearly marked in the role-playing game, with the children taking on roles that change over the course of a decade .)

Geography/Mapping:

- Choose the best map for a specific purpose, recognizing that there are many kinds of maps for different purposes.
- In kilometers, compare distances to places under study.
(A number of maps are used throughout the kit, including a map of the world, maps of Afghanistan, and a map of Alberta; distances between cities in Afghanistan and cities in Alberta are compared.)

Analyzing, Synthesizing/Evaluating:

- Draw conclusions about how the characteristics of a physical region affect natural resources, occupations, population distribution, and transportation.
- From physical geography and latitude, infer human activities and ways of living.
- Draw conclusions about the advantages and disadvantages of interacting with different countries.
(Various geographical features of Afghanistan are pointed out, with comparisons made to the geography of Alberta and how occupation, population distribution, and

transportation are affected; rural and urban lifestyles are compared; interaction with other countries is highlighted.)

Communication Skills:

- Make meaningful contributions to discussions, supporting ideas with facts and reasons.
- Take notes in point form, using various sources; oral, written, or viewed presentations.

(Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion that invites them to compare their own lives to the lives of Afghan people.)

Participation Skills:

- Participate in a small group discussion or activity by following established rules.
 - Contribute to various functions of group work as recorder, reporter, and leader.
- (Students will break out into smaller groups during the role-playing game; students will fulfill the roles of recorder and reporter in the game; the presentation is intended to engage the students in discussion as well as listening and viewing.)*

Grade Six

Knowledge Objectives:

- An individual has responsibilities and rights as a citizen, which begin at the local level.
 - The ways in which physical, social, and psychological needs are met have varied over time and from place to place.
 - Nations in the world are becoming increasingly interdependent.
- (The students will engage in discussion as to how we, as Albertans, exercise our civic duty by voting, helping our homeless, looking after our environment, etc. They will learn that the people of Afghanistan are now able to exercise some of those duties in their own communities, as well. Through the role-playing game and ensuing exploration of the characters, the students will learn that needs are met differently under different circumstances. They will also explore how the nations of the world are tied to one another economically and politically.)*

Locating/Organizing/Interpreting Information:

- Acquire information from a variety of sources; newspapers, news broadcasts, magazines, and pamphlets, recognizing the differences in purpose and coverage.
 - Distinguish between fact and opinion.
 - Distinguish between fact and historical fiction.
- (A list of recommended books, both fiction and non-fiction, articles, and websites is provided; students are shown ways in which many differing opinions can be formed from the same facts e.g., the Taliban opinion of the rights of women in Afghan society versus the opinion of the women themselves, versus the varying opinions in the international community; Deborah Ellis' The Breadwinner series is offered as an example of historical fiction about the plight of Afghan people in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.)*

Geography/Mapping:

- Choose the best map for a specific purpose, recognizing that there are many kinds of maps for different purposes.
- Estimate, and then compute distances between places studied.
- Compare distances in kilometers to places under study.
- Use two or more maps to gather information about the same area.
(A number of maps are used throughout the kit, including a map of the world, maps of Afghanistan, and a map of Alberta; distances between cities in Afghanistan and cities in Alberta are compared.)

Analyzing, Synthesizing/Evaluating:

- Analyze how government action can affect people, both positively and negatively.
- Draw conclusions about rights and responsibilities of citizens.
(Throughout the kit are numerous examples of how government and citizen action, both within Afghanistan and outside the country, has affected the lives of Afghan people. Students are invited to explore how they, as individuals and small groups, can effect change in their world.)

Communication Skills:

- Summarize information from a variety of sources
- Write a summary of main points encountered in oral, written, or viewed presentations.
(At various points in the lessons students are asked to summarize what they have learned about human rights and human rights violations first from their own background knowledge, then from the presentation, the UN website which outlines the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and their readings from the Deborah Ellis The Breadwinner series.)

Participation Skills:

- Demonstrate respect for the rights and opinions of others.
- Participate in a small group discussion or activity by following established rules.
- Plan, carry out, and evaluate an action that would demonstrate responsible citizenship.
(Students will break out into smaller groups during the role-playing game and will be expected to respect the opinions of other group members; a “Suggestions for Action” section is included in the resource booklet, and students are encouraged to come up with their own plans for demonstrating global citizenship.)

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- Respect for opinions and rights of others.
- Responsibility for one’s own actions.
- Satisfaction in exercising one’s role as a citizen.
- Objectivity by examining one’s own ideas about what is a better way of meeting basic needs.
- Empathy for the problems faced in meeting one’s needs.

Grade Seven

Knowledge Objectives:

- Communication in all its forms is the means by which culture is learned.
 - Socialization is achieved through interaction with others.
 - Beliefs and values influence behavior.
 - Individuals assume a variety of roles.
 - Cultural transition occurs as a result of internal and external influences.
 - Change results from one or a combination of causes.
 - Change is a continuous process occurring unevenly within cultures.
 - Some aspects of culture are more enduring than others.
- (Students will be shown what happens when access to communication and media is curtailed, as well as the effects of the social isolation of a large group of a population; the effect of religious beliefs, cultural values, and their various interpretations on behavior is repeatedly demonstrated, as is how some aspects of culture endure regardless of outside influences and changes within a society.)*

Locating/Organizing/Interpreting Information:

- Identify and define topics.
 - Identify possible sources and locations of information.
 - Differentiate between main and related ideas.
 - Read and interpret maps to identify relationships between geography and culture.
 - Identify the purposes, messages, and intended audience of visual communications.
- (Topics and sub-topics relating to the inequitable access to human rights in Afghanistan and Canada are explored through a variety of media and from a variety sources e.g., various NGOs, the New York Times, the UN, etc.; maps are included with explanations of geographical features and how they dictate land usage, transportation, communication, etc.)*

Analyzing, Synthesizing/Evaluating:

- Compare information about a topic drawn from two or more sources to see if it is identical, parallel, or similar, or inconsistent, unrelated, or contradictory.
 - Draw conclusions about basic aspects of culture.
 - Identify and evaluate alternative answers, conclusions, solutions, or decisions regarding questions and issues used for inquiry and research on culture.
 - Categorize information to develop concepts – agents of change, transition, and cultural retention.
- (Students may be asked to listen to the presentation and read the New York Times article, then compare the information given in each for consistency and relativity; information on Afghan culture is presented from a variety of sources - students are invited to analyze and evaluate the information to develop their understanding of the concepts i.e., agents of change, transition and cultural retention.)*

Participation Skills:

- Converse with others in a variety of settings including informal, small groups and whole class discussions.
- Observe the courtesies of group discussion such as speaking in turn, using appropriate tone, and giving feedback in a non-threatening manner.

- Contribute to the group (leader, recorder, member) and group processes – staying on topic, extending the ideas of others, paraphrasing, and working toward a consensus or a decision.

(Students will interact in large and small groups during the role-playing game; students will fulfill the roles of recorder and team members in the game and must work together to come to conclusions regarding the human rights of their character and those of Canadian schoolchildren; the presentation is intended to engage the students in group discussion as well as listening and viewing.)

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- Appreciation and respect for the worth of all people.
- Confidence in expressing their own ideas.
- Empathy for people experiencing change.
- Sensitivity to the customs and beliefs of cultural groups other than their own.

Grade Eight

Knowledge Objectives:

- The environment is constantly being changed by human and physical forces.
- Unequal distribution of resources between regions may lead to movement of goods, people, and ideas.
- The use of more than one official language results from a nation's unique history.
- The physical environment provides opportunity and at the same time imposes limitations.
- Modification of the physical environment can have both beneficial and detrimental effects.

(As discussed in the presentation and role-playing game, the environment of Afghanistan has been forever changed by warfare and the laying of landmines; with four official languages and unequal distribution of wealth and resources amongst the various ethnic groups, Afghanistan has had a long history of cultural divergence, which has also been exacerbated by its varied and sometimes harsh physical environment.)

Locating/Organizing/Interpreting Information:

- Identify possible sources and locations of information (print, non-print, interviews, surveys.)
- Differentiate between main and related ideas.
- Identify the purposes, messages, and intended audience of visual communications.
- Read and interpret maps to identify relationships between geography and culture.
- Acquire information to find answers to questions through listening, observing, reading, and utilizing community resources.

(Topics and sub-topics relating to the inequitable access to human rights in Afghanistan and Canada are explored through a variety of media and from a variety sources e.g., various NGOs, the New York Times, the UN, etc.; maps are included with explanations of geographical features and how they dictate land usage, transportation, communication, etc.; students will listen to and view the

presentation, read the supporting materials, and be encouraged to further explore human rights issues through various local, national, and international NGOs.)

Analyzing, Synthesizing/Evaluating:

- Compare information about a topic drawn from two or more sources to see if it is identical, parallel, or similar, or inconsistent, unrelated, or contradictory.
- Categorize information to develop concepts – regions, location, place, movement, and environmental interaction.
- Make generalizations by stating relationships among concepts about interactions of people with their physical environment.

(Students may be asked to listen to the presentation and read the New York Times article, then compare the information given in each for consistency and relativity; information on Afghan culture is presented from a variety of sources - students are invited to analyze and evaluate the information to develop their understanding of human rights and the interaction of people with their physical environments in times of peace and war.)

Participation Skills:

- Converse with others in a variety of settings including informal, small groups and whole class discussions.
- Observe the courtesies of group discussion such as speaking in turn, using appropriate tone, and giving feedback in a non-threatening manner.
- Contribute to the group (leader, recorder, member) and group processes – staying on topic, extending the ideas of others, paraphrasing, and working toward a consensus or a decision.

(Students will interact in large and small groups during the role-playing game; students will fulfill the roles of recorder and team members in the game and must work together to come to conclusions regarding the human rights of their character and those of Canadian schoolchildren; the presentation is intended to engage the students in class and group discussions as well as listening and viewing.)

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- Appreciation for consequences of people's interaction with their environment.
- Appreciation of interdependence as a common feature of life.
- Willingness to cooperate and work with others.
- Appreciation for the way in which knowledge of the past helps them understand the present and the future.
- Acceptance of the responsibility of the individual in the global community.
- Respect and tolerance for the rights, needs, opinions and concerns of others.
- Sensitivity to the points of view of cultural groups other than their own.

Grade Nine

Knowledge Objectives:

- Economic growth and technological change affect the quality of life.
- Quality of life is affected by changes in technology.
- Economic changes occur as a result of internal and external influences.
(Students will learn of ways in which quality of life in Afghanistan has been affected positively and negatively by changes in educational technology, healthcare technology, and warfare technology; they will be shown the economic effects of international influences, from the Silk Road through the Cold War and beyond, as well as the economic effect of factional conflict within the country.)

Locating/Organizing/Interpreting Information:

- Differentiate between main and related ideas.
- Identify the purposes, messages, and intended audience of visual communications.
- Identify and define topics.
- Acquire information to find answers to questions through listening, observing, reading, and utilizing community resources.
- Identify and critically evaluate the relationship among the purposes, messages, and intended audience of visual communications.
- Identify points of view expressed in cartoons, pictures, and photographs.
(Topics and sub-topics relating to the inequitable access to human rights in Afghanistan and Canada are explored through a variety of media and from a variety sources e.g., various NGOs, the New York Times, the UN, etc; students will listen to and view the presentation, read the supporting materials, and be encouraged to further explore human rights issues through various local, national, and international NGOs.)

Analyzing, Synthesizing/Evaluating:

- Compare information about a topic drawn from two or more sources to see if it is identical, parallel, or similar, or inconsistent, unrelated, or contradictory; detect bias.
- Identify and evaluate alternative answers, conclusions, solutions, or decisions regarding questions and issues used for inquiry and research on responding to change.
(Students may be asked to listen to the presentation and read the New York Times article, then compare the information given in each for consistency and relativity; information on Afghan culture is presented from a variety of sources - students are invited to analyze and evaluate the information to develop their understanding of human rights and how individuals and societies respond to political, social, and economic change.)

Participation Skills:

- Observe the courtesies of group discussion such as speaking in turn, using appropriate tone, and giving feedback in a non-threatening manner.
- Contribute to the group (leader, recorder, member) and group processes – staying on topic, extending the ideas of others, paraphrasing, and working toward a consensus or a decision.

(Students will engage in group discussion during the role-playing game and subsequent character analyses; students will fulfill the roles of recorder and team members in the game and must work together to come to conclusions regarding the human rights of their character and those of Canadian schoolchildren.)

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- Acceptance that change is a common feature of life.
- Awareness that technology raises many ethical issues.
- Appreciation that social issues are complex and may take time to resolve.
- Appreciation of the worth of individual initiative and group effort in achieving goals.
- Willingness to consider opinions and interpretations different from their own.
- Appreciation of the contributions of individuals and groups to improving the quality of life.
- Empathy for people who have been affected by change.

Social Studies 10

Knowledge Objectives:

- Geographic factors influence a nation's sovereignty.
- The achievement of sovereignty has been a process shaped by internal and external forces.
- A nation's foreign policy must be balanced between its interests and the interests of other nations.
- The consequences of foreign policy can result in conflict or cooperation with other nations.
- The degree of citizen participation and the exercise of an individual's political power and responsibilities are influenced by a variety of factors.
- The citizen has a role in the political process.
- Political differences are resolved through a variety of approaches.
- Rights and responsibilities are associated with citizenship.
- There are basic human rights that need to be protected.

(Throughout the kit the sovereignty of Afghanistan is explained as having been in flux for decades, if not centuries. It's geographical position, external attempts at occupation, and factional infighting have all threatened the country's independence at various times in its history. The rights and responsibilities of the country's citizens and governments have been influenced by a variety of external and internal factors. In recent years especially, human rights issues have been brought to the attention of Afghanistan's general population, which in turn is beginning to pressure its governments.)

Process Skills:

- Acquire information from print and nonprint resources.
- Record and organize information in note form.
- Analyze and evaluate information, including detecting bias, and distinguishing fact from opinion.
- Interpret and summarize information.
- Recognize underlying assumptions on an issue.

(Information on human rights, sovereignty and citizenship, and internal and external conflict is supplied throughout the kit in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, an interactive role-playing game, Q&A and suggested print, film, and web resources. The lesson plans supply activities for the gathering, analyzing, and evaluating the information.)

Communication Skills:

- Express and defend ideas in written form.
- Present ideas through visual/multimedia materials.
- Report on research results.
- Present ideas effectively in class discussion.
- Defend a position in a short, written assignment.

*(The high school lesson plans include a number of research and writing assignments such as a K*W*L activity on political, economic, and social conditions in Afghanistan; a RAFT assignment on human rights in Afghanistan; and a current*

events scrapbook. Students are expected to present their research in a classroom setting.)

Participation Skills:

- Work at individual tasks in a group situation.
- Work together in proposing and discussing alternative solutions to issues.
- Choose appropriate strategies for bringing about change in society.
(Students will be required to work independently and in groups through various components of the kit. A “Suggestions for Action” section is included in the resource booklet, and students are encouraged to come up with their own plans for demonstrating global citizenship.)

Inquiry Strategies:

- Apply critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving and decision-making.
- Develop the ability to propose and discuss alternative solutions to issues.
- Use appropriate inquiry models to answer questions, solve problems, and resolve issues.
- Develop further the creative and critical thinking skills necessary for responsible citizenship.
(Students are encouraged to look at human rights issues from a variety of perspectives and to critically examine their own and others’ positions in order to responsibly solve problems and make decisions; students are asked to come up with creative ways in which they themselves can be more responsible global citizens.)

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- An appreciation of and a respect for the rights of others.
- And value peaceful resolution of conflict.
- A respect for the rights of others to hold opinions different from one’s own.
- An appreciation of the fact that citizenship involves participation in the community and the nation.

Social Studies 20

Knowledge Objectives:

- The emergence of new ideas and forces result in changes within a society.
- Nations engage in imperialism for a variety of motives.
- The pursuit of national interests at the expense of other nations may result in international conflict.
- Warfare leads to change.
- Diversity and disparity exist in the modern world.
- Nations are interdependent.
- National interests affect international relationships.
- Quality of life is composed of a variety of factors.
- Quality of life is defined from different perspectives.
- Quality of life is increasingly affected by issues of global concern.
- There are issues of common global concern.

- Solutions to global concerns often require international dialogue.
- There are potential solutions to global concerns.
(Students will be shown, through the presentation, role-playing game, discussions, and lessons, how Soviet imperialism resulted in international and civil warfare in Afghanistan, which eventually precipitated the emergence of the Taliban in late 20th century Afghanistan, which then brought about major changes in Afghan society; quality of life will be shown to have plummeted for many Afghans over the years of conflict; and students will learn that basic human rights are an issue of common global concern whose solution can only come from global dialogue and co-operation.)

Process Skills:

- Summarize information from a variety of print and nonprint sources.
- Distinguish among different points of view.
- Summarize materials after listening to and observing presentations.
- Interpret and use information from maps, graphs, charts, and tables.
- Identify appropriate information and ideas as evidence to support a point of view.
(Information is provided in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, game cards, web resources, maps, charts, articles, and books; lesson plan activities direct students to summarize the information given and use it to support a position.)

Communication Skills:

- Convey information and express ideas using timelines, charts, and concept maps.
- Use comparisons and examples in a written presentation.
(Students will use timelines and charts in the role-playing game to chart the progress of an Afghan character's life and his/her access to human rights; students are asked to compare many aspects of their own lives to those of the Afghan characters; the lesson plans include a variety of writing and presenting exercises to help students convey the information they've acquired.)

Participation Skills:

- Interact effectively with others in a group setting.
- Participate in an informed way in discussions on global issues that affect society.
(Students will interact in group settings through various components of the kit; the presentation, role-playing game, and lessons provide for student participation in discussions of global issues that affect Afghan and Canadian societies.)

Inquiry Strategies:

- Use creative and critical thinking skills in problem solving and decision-making strategies.
- Consider alternatives, make decisions, and substantiate choices.
- Critically examine processes and changes that have affected society.
- Use appropriate inquiry models to answer questions, solve problems, and resolve issues.
(Students are encouraged to look at human rights issues from a variety of perspectives and to critically examine their own and others' positions in order to responsibly solve problems and make decisions.)

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- An appreciation of the influence of ideas from the past on society.
- An awareness of different points of view on issues and episodes in the human experience.
- Respect for the rights of others to hold a different point of view.
- An appreciation of the need to understand the background to events and issues.
- An appreciation of the diversity that exists in the world.
- An appreciation that different perspectives exist on the quality of life.
- A willingness to consider a variety of perspectives on global issues and questions.

Social Studies 30*

Knowledge Objectives:

- Ideologies contain beliefs and ideas about human nature and are used to explain and justify political and economic systems.
- Political systems are organized to allocate political power that involves the authority to make and to implement decisions in society.
- Political systems may be organized in a democratic manner.
- Political systems may be organized in a dictatorial manner.
- Political and economic systems adapt to new ideas and changing circumstances.
- Political leaders achieve, exercise, and maintain power in different ways in democracies and dictatorships.
- The role of the individual in society is affected by the emphasis placed on collective good or individualism.
- New issues and ideas challenge traditional political and economic beliefs and practices.
- International confrontations arise from a variety of motives and result in different types of interactions.
- International cooperation arises from a variety of motives and results in different forms of cooperation.
- Attempts at international cooperation are sometimes successful.
- Security arrangements may strengthen or undermine global systems of collective security.
- Expansionist foreign policy may arise from a variety of motives or circumstances and elicit a variety of responses.
- A shift in the balance of power results in new alignments among nations.
- International arrangements for global peace and stability take into account the realities of power.
- The super-powers have faced pressures of self-determination within their spheres of influence.
- Global interactions are increasingly influenced by economic developments.
- Concern for global peace, human rights, and the environment has emphasized the need for international cooperation and understanding.
- Concern for global peace and stability has been heightened by the emergence of new states and the disintegration of others.

Process Skills:

- Access and use appropriate sources of information.
- Synthesize information and ideas.
- Determine underlying assumptions of a statement or position.
- Formulate and evaluate alternative conclusions, solutions and decisions.
- Logically defend a position on an issue or a problem.
- Analyze information from a variety of sources, compare different points of view and predict outcomes.
- Propose and evaluate solutions to international problems.

Communication Skills:

- Effectively defend a point of view orally or in writing.
- Write persuasively and effectively to support one's point of view.
- Construct and use visual aids to support ideas.

Participation Skills:

- Work with others in a group setting to reach consensus or compromise.
- Assume appropriate leadership and support roles.
- Use a variety of skills in an appropriate manner – exhibit confidence in own ideas and work, but present them in a considerate manner.
- Display self-confidence and respect for the opinions of other when discussing social issues.
- Work effectively with others in a variety of group settings.
- Participate effectively in social and political processes.

Inquiry Strategies:

- Demonstrate maturity of thought in stating and defending a position.
- Use creative analogy and metaphor to show relationships or describe a situation.
- Explain the cause and effect relationships among historical events.
- Establish relationships between historical events and present circumstances.
- Evaluate strategies used by nations, organizations, and individuals in dealing with international problems.
- Use appropriate inquiry models to answer questions, solve problems, and resolve issues regarding international interactions.

Attitude Objectives:

Students will be encouraged to develop:

- An appreciation of independent and critical thinking about significant social issues.
- Intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness and interest in current issues related to political and economic systems.
- An appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of different economic and political systems.
- And demonstrate a commitment to citizenship in democratic systems.
- A sense of curiosity regarding patterns of global interaction.
- An appreciation of the interdependent nature of the world.
- An active interest in international issues and events.
- Commitment to the achievement of constructive and positive global interactions.

**Themes presented in the Social Studies 30 curriculum are closely associated with those presented in the teachers' resource kit. Such knowledge objectives as political systems, the power of political leaders in democracies and dictatorships, a society's emphasis on individualism or collective good, international co-operation and confrontation, the self-determination of super-powers, etc. are distributed throughout all areas of the kit. Although the 'Background' section on pages v through xi of the teachers' resource booklet is intended for use by teachers, it would be of particular use and interest to grade twelve students, as well. Likewise, the curriculum's stated skills objectives and inquiry strategies laid out in the above section are addressed in the grades 10-12 lesson plans provided, which is not to say that SS 30 students would not benefit from the PowerPoint presentation or the role-playing game. On the contrary – the kit was designed with elements intended to appeal to visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learners of all ages.*

**Canadian Women for Women
in Afghanistan**

APPENDIX F

LESSON PLANS

Grades 7 -12



**Understanding Human Rights
in Afghanistan**

Canadian Students as Global Citizens



Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan *Canadian Students as Global Citizens*

Lesson #1: Psycho-social Effects of Conflict in Afghanistan

Activity #1 - Group Lesson

Instruct the students to read The Chain, by Arthur Kent (page F-22).

Go to <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/landincrisis/ethnic.html> to view the map of Afghanistan entitled “Ethnic Groups Map”.

Divide the students into groups of three or four and ask them to discuss the following questions within their groups. Have one student from each group act as a recorder.

1. Our beliefs and values influence our behavior. Hasham had endured many personal hardships as a result of the wars in Afghanistan. How might he have handled the situation with the landmine differently had he not witnessed so much injustice?
2. There are an estimated 10 million landmines and UXOs (please define) left on Afghan soil. How do these human modifications to the environment affect the movement of people and goods? How do they affect industries such as agriculture and tourism? Are there ways in which human involvement has changed the physical environment of Canada? If so, what have been the effects of the changes?
3. The use of more than one official language results from a nation’s unique history. List the four main ethnic groups in Afghanistan. List the two official languages of Canada. Have cultural differences lead to internal violent conflict in Afghanistan? In Canada? Give one example each of how different ethnic groups have managed to co-exist peacefully in Afghanistan and in Canada.
4. Does the use of technology raise ethical issues? Hasham had the opportunity to use a landmine as a weapon against several of his enemies. Would his decision have been different if he had not had access to the technology? Give another example of how technology or access to technology might affect a person’s decision-making in an ethically challenging situation.

Activity #2 - Individual Lesson

The Three Rs

Re-tell the story of The Chain in your own words.

Relate Hasham's moral dilemma to one that you have experienced in your own life or that of someone you know. Does the human rights situation in Afghanistan remind you of a similar situation in another country? Does Hasham's initial feeling of powerlessness remind you of feelings you have personally experienced?

Reflect on how Hasham might have handled the situation differently, and why. Reflect on how Hasham's previous experiences influenced his decisions.

Extensions

1. Go to www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plain.asp to view the United Nations Rights of the Child Declaration. Complete a comparison chart or a check-list between Canada and Afghanistan. Which rights listed by the UN are guaranteed by the Canadian Government? Do the leaders in Afghanistan ensure the rights of children? Why is it important that countries respect these rights? How do they help the people in the short term? How about the long term? What rights could be added?
2. What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder? What groups of people commonly suffer from this disorder?
3. Go to <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/landincrisis/drought.html> to study the physical geography of Afghanistan – soil, natural resources, bodies of water, vegetation, landforms and climate. How does physical geography influence human geography or culture?
4. Feelings/Needs/Wants: Define the three main terms. What are the basic Human Needs of people? What are other things that people need? What needs are filled for the people of Afghanistan?

THE CHAIN

©2005 G. Arthur Kent

2000

Civil war rages in Afghanistan. Civilians can cross between Northern Alliance territory and the Taliban-controlled south at only a few places. But this means risking everything, including their lives.

Old Hasham knew what the brown plastic object was the moment he saw it lying in the sand. He might have missed it had he not been stooped over as he trudged along, rubbing the back of his head where the Talib guard had clipped him with the rifle butt.

Hasham had paid the usual bribe, 5,000 Afghanis, but the boy in the black turban wanted more. And for what? For bringing one miserable load of sheep's wool across no-man's-land. There'd been barely enough to fill the packs on a single donkey. But the Taliban must have their tribute, and there was no reasoning with them. No sooner had another of Hasham's 1,000 Afghani notes been snapped up by the gunman's greedy fingers than the boy had clubbed him, not very hard but with great insolence.

Now the urge for revenge was welling up within him, like hot needles piercing his scalp. So when he saw the edge of the land mine peeking up from the pothole in the road, he stopped and let his staff fall from his grasp. Then, bending down to pick it up, he took three quick swipes at the loose earth with his right hand. That's all it took. The mine was returned to its hiding place beneath the soil. Hasham straightened his sixty-year-old frame and walked on. The donkey followed.

Everyone knew the road was mined. Not where, exactly, the mines had been placed, but it was common knowledge that since the Soviet war the route had been one long booby trap for heavy vehicles trying to pass between Laghman province in the south and the Panjshir Valley to the north. Russians, Afghan soldiers, the mujahideen -- all of them had buried mines here in hopes of blasting an enemy tank or truck from the face of the earth. People could walk right over the hidden explosives. Everyone who took this narrow passage through no-man's-land was forced to do so. Only something as heavy as a car or truck would trigger the big mines.

When the Taliban and Northern Alliance had fought each other to a stalemate in the region, the road became an ideal crossing point for foot traffic between their two hungry, ravaged dominions.

How wicked, Hasham thought, that Afghans were spilling one another's blood while the warlords, the masters of death, profited on this meagre trickle of trade across the battlefield. The warlords knew full well that their battlefronts divided both land and people in a wholly unnatural way. Civilians and goods needed to pass between north and south, so there was money to be made. Both sides taxed everybody and everything seeking transit during lulls in the fighting.

The opposing armies had even agreed a schedule for this criminality. For two days each week, cease-fires would be in effect on the road. All civilians could pass, including foreign aid workers and journalists, provided they were unarmed and on foot. Everyone would be searched. Officially, it was forbidden to offer or accept bribes, which ensured, of course, that bribes ruled the way. The whole thing was cloaked in slogans about allowing humanitarian rights of passage. But Hasham and all the common people saw the warlords and their armies for what they truly were. Parasites, a blight on the land.

Certainly Hasham, as a Panjshiri, respected Commander Massoud. But did Massoud realize that some of his own Northern Alliance allies were as greedy as the worst of the Talibs? Did the commander understand that even now, as Hasham paused

at the spring to wash the blood from his scalp, he was wondering what other young robber might be waiting up ahead, in Massoud's territory, claiming to be collecting baksheesh for the brave defenders of the north? True enough, there'd likely be no beating. The Talibs, on the other hand, were unrivalled in their aptitude for brutality. The boy who'd struck him was practically a foreigner – his face and speech and turban were of Kandahar, far to the southeast, another world to this.

Resistance was useless. Avoiding the Taliban was the best course, but this only meant living in the embrace of the more genial gunmen of the north. What misery, Hasham thought. What had the ordinary people of Afghanistan done to deserve this? Twenty years of war and catastrophe. What were honest and decent people to do?

Hasham swabbed at his scalp with his handkerchief until the blood stopped flowing. Then he put on his skullcap and wound his turban as before. He walked on. The donkey followed.

The Shomali Plain was there before him, the whole sweeping expanse of it. Since boyhood, this had been his world. It looked green and inviting under the sun, but this was an illusion. The tree cover concealed dead fields sewn with mines and wreckage. After two decades of war, only a tiny fraction of the Shomali's population remained. Most of his people had sought refuge long ago in the camps of Pakistan, or in Kabul, sixty miles to the south.

Kabul. He hadn't seen in the capital for three years. The Taliban had seized power, pushing Massoud far to the north. Massoud had pushed back. Then the front line had shifted north and south as if dragged along by the riders in a buzkashi. Hasham mainly found himself in the Northern Alliance zone. But he never fooled himself. Like all the people, north and south, he was a captive, a captive of the warlords. A captive farmer, a trader of food and valuables, reduced to leading donkeys back and forth through no-man's-land. A load of wool here, some traveler's personal belongings there, maybe a few boxes for the Red Cross people – the foreigners, at least, could afford to pay him a decent fare.

Hasham's thoughts strayed back to the mine.

He had seen what an anti-tank mine could do. The Panjshir was full of the hulks of Soviet tanks, wrecked and overturned like slaughtered iron beasts. Mere trucks or cars were obliterated by the explosions. Is that what Hasham wished for the Taliban who'd struck him, and for his vile brothers? No one from the northern side got that far south on anything bigger than a donkey. Now, that mine, that killing machine, lay hidden there, waiting for anyone foolish or lazy enough to drive a truck over it.

Had he, Hasham of Gulbahar, been reduced to a blood yearning? Was he now thirsting for revenge – the very condition of those he most despised, the men of Kalashnikovs and bombs? Yes, he had. You've failed yourself, he thought, and in his shame and confusion he realized that he must seek absolution.

There was only one person left in the world who could help him: Shakoor, his best friend. Hasham would go to him now, tell Shakoor about the mine and what he'd done. Together they'd determine what to do next. Perhaps they would inform Massoud's people. That was one possibility. Or they might send someone to mark the mine. Aided by Hasham's directions, a boy could pretend to discover it. Done convincingly, this would earn praise from the Taliban. Neither of the warring parties viewed it as helpful to have explosions or gunfire on the road, regardless of who or what might be destroyed. The killing could go on all around, and with little provocation the gunmen would gleefully set about that task. But the road meant money. The road must be protected.

Hasham reflected on these dismal truths until he reached the first Northern Alliance post. There a sleepy boy-soldier waved him through with a respectful "salaam, father." Hasham felt obliged to smile in response. At least this young man displayed a

shred of the respect elders had once enjoyed throughout Afghanistan. But Hasham was tired and numb and the rifle he saw hanging from the boy's shoulder was a reminder of the domination of the warlords. So he just grunted and walked on by. The donkey followed.

The final stretch of the path went up and over some boulders that blocked the width of the road. He urged his donkey over this and then the going was easy, all downhill. The sound of music came out to greet him – Shakoor's cassette player, blaring as usual. People were milling around outside the teahouses. These were flimsy wooden structures but to weary travelers they held out the welcome aromas of civilization, namely wood smoke and tea. Nearby, a number of gaily-painted jeeps waited for people arriving from the Taliban zone.

Hasham found Shakoor at his usual station, standing before a grill in the open air. He was cooking up a fresh catch of fish. Several boys from the village were squatting nearby, watching Shakoor fan the coals.

"Welcome back, brother," Shakoor called out. "What have you brought me this time? A daughter of Mullah Omar? The prettiest one I hope."

This was one of their running jokes. Omar was said to have given a daughter in marriage to Osama bin Laden, though Mr. George, the Canadian journalist, had told them it was the other way around, that bin Laden had presented a daughter to Omar. Anyway, the ritual had to be maintained.

"I don't know what happened," Hasham said, "I had her sitting right here." He patted the donkey's back. "Maybe she ran off with some merchant from Kandahar."

"Not possible," Shakoor said. "Too busy counting their money."

"As you say," Hasham said.

Shakoor shifted the fish filets on the spitting barbecue. "Want something to eat?"

"No," Hasham said. "I've done nothing to earn it."

"No buyer for your wool?"

"I found a buyer. But at half the price I'd have gotten in Kabul."

"And the bandits, the tax collectors?" Shakoor asked him.

"Like flies around my ears. They took what they wanted, as usual."

"They're animals," Shakoor said. "Animals, all of them."

Hasham shook his head. "They're what drops from an animal's behind."

Shakoor laughed, and Hasham, watching the lines on his friend's face, lines as deep as crevasses on a glacier, could still recognize the boy of half a century earlier. Even in youth, Shakoor had been the happier of the pair, always joking, always on the lookout for mischief and fun. Now they were both old men. But in their eyes they still shared the confidences and trust of true friends, of brothers negotiating a difficult common path.

"Before I die I wish just one thing," Shakoor said as he turned the sizzling fish. "That these Talibs go straight to hell, just like the Soviets. That our young people" – he motioned at the gaggle of boys – "know real freedom some day."

"You'll be lucky, living that long," Hasham told him. "This is our final curse, Shakoor Khan. The Talibs are like locusts, and we have no potion or poison to turn them away. I ask you: who will help us rid ourselves of them? Who in the world spares even a thought for us?"

"You're as gloomy as a woman," Shakoor said. "Say, what's that? Is that blood you've got there?" He reached for the trail of Hasham's turban, ran his fingers over the red-stained cloth.

"Oh, that?" Hasham said. "That's proof I'm still alive. One day when they hit me, nothing will come out. Then you'll know it's finally time to put me in the ground."

Anger flared in Shakoor's eyes. "Beasts," he hissed. "They're vile beasts, the corrupt of the earth."

"I tried to wash it off along the way," Hasham told him.

"We can do that later. Here – have some fish, Hasham. Just a little. This one, here. Try a mouthful."

Hasham took the fish filet from Shakoor's fingers and put it in his mouth. It scalded his tongue for an instant, and then the taste was there, savoury and wild. "It's good... Maybe a small slice, then. That one, if you can spare it."

"And some tea," Shakoor said. "Boys! Green tea, quickly." The youngsters giggled and jostled one another. Finally one of them ran off to the nearest teahouse.

"Thank you, my friend," Hasham said. "But I have no money."

"Don't insult me. Eat." Shakoor forked another slice onto a piece of bread. Hasham ate slowly. After a few mouthfuls he said quietly, so no one but Shakoor could hear: "I found something on the trail. A mine. An old one, but big. Soviet, I think."

"Where?"

"At the south end. Within sight of the chain."

A rusty length of chain, slung across the road, marked the Taliban frontier.

Shakoor said: "Too bad the Talibs didn't find it first – with the wheel of a truck!" The boy appeared with a teapot and two cups. "Put it down and wait over there with your friends," Shakoor told him, "and there'll be some leftovers for you when the day's done." Hasham swallowed the last of his fish and knelt to pour the tea. Shakoor asked him: "What did they do with it?"

"With what?"

"The mine. What did the Talibs do with the mine?"

"Nothing, I guess. They were too busy bothering people to even notice it."

Shakoor let out a short, barking laugh. He glanced nervously over his shoulder to make certain no one was listening. "So you just left it there? Unmarked?"

"I covered it up again," Hasham shrugged.

"You did what?"

"Pushed a little sand over it. Made it as it was before. Hid it."

Shakoor reflected a moment. "Maybe it's a dead one. Spoiled explosives, or a broken pressure plate."

"Maybe," Hasham said. "More likely, nothing heavy has rolled over it all these years."

Shakoor's eyes were wide and wondering. "But if it's live, if it could still go off," he said. "Then it's no longer a Soviet mine, Hasham. It's yours. It's your weapon now. You found it, you covered it up again. Think about it -- you might as well have planted it yourself."

Hasham nodded gravely and sipped his tea. "In a way you're right, I suppose. I can't tell you what came into my mind. I was dizzy from the blow. I just did it."

"You were angry, you were hurt. And why not?"

This wasn't a pleasant suggestion to Hasham and he said so. "I admit I was full of hate. But I've never been so hateful that I'd stoop to getting anyone killed."

"They deserve to die, Hasham."

"Certainly. But not by my hand."

"Be serious," Shakoor said. "You want to strike back, part of you at least. Who could blame you after all you've suffered -- *we've* suffered. It's not just the Taliban, it's not only the boy who smacked you. It's been this way our whole lives, Hasham. Our lives and those of our children, taken away, stolen from us. By cruel men, hooligans with guns."

"What are you saying?" Hasham said. "That we're mad with grief? Lost all control? That's your excuse?"

"It would be madness *not* to feel like hitting back," Shakoor said. "You talk about the blood still flowing in your veins but there's anger there, too. You'd be truly dead and ready for the grave if you took the blows and felt only pain. Your heart's crying out, not just your body. It's crying out to hit back. To strike those who struck you."

Hasham nodded, but this kind of thinking always tormented him. Bad memories surfaced. Faces appeared in his imagination, the faces he saw in the depths of night lying sleepless in his bed. They were the loved ones he and Shakoor had lost in the long ruinous tempest of the war. Both their first wives, the mothers of their children. Both had been killed by Soviet bombs. Shakoor's eldest son and both Hasham's boys, too, had gone off with the mujahideen to fight the Russians. They'd never been heard of again.

All their other children -- Shakoor's two remaining boys and Hasham's three girls -- had long since gone to camps in Pakistan. If they were lucky, his daughters might make a tolerable marriage and escape to Europe or America. Anywhere but home. Afghanistan had become a nation ruled by the men of war, a place just for them and their victims, old men like Shakoor and Hasham.

"You're right," Hasham said. "I felt more than a blow on the head. I felt something push me inside. That's why I hid the mine. But now all I feel is doubt. I ask myself: what good would one mine do? One explosion? Kill two or three of the bandits? Destroy a truck maybe? It's hopeless, it would be like a child casting a small stone at a giant."

Shakoor gripped his friend's shoulder. "What you did was only a gesture, perhaps, but it was *something*. And it was just. You're not the problem, Hasham. The problem is that more of us haven't done what you did. Done *something*."

Hasham's eyes wandered the horizon. He wasn't convinced. Revenge was a horrid word to him. Vengeance had stalked Afghanistan hand in hand with greed. This had been the Afghans' ruin. Vengeance was the way of the warlords. But he and Shakoor were different. All their lives they had been family men, men of peace. What point was there in lashing out now? No, better to tell Massoud's people about the mine, shift the responsibility to them. The local commander was always going on about how the road was a strategic military concern. Let him decide what to do.

Hasham set about explaining this conclusion to Shakoor, but they were interrupted by a truck pulling up noisily in front of the teahouse. A gang of armed youths jumped out of the rear of the vehicle. Then a tall, overfed man in military garb stepped from the passenger side of the cab.

"Abdul Kashal," Shakoor said, as if muttering a curse. Both he and Hasham turned away, hoping to avoid the newcomer's attention.

"You there! Old man!" The overfed man was stalking towards them. The boys scattered, clearing a path for him. "You! Hasham! You have work to do, you old buzzard. Don't tell me you're eating so well that you'd turn your back on some honest work?"

"Sahib," Hasham feigned, bowing his head slightly. "You know it's always my pleasure to serve you." He stood straight now, face to face with Kashal. The full brow, the narrow black eyes and gleaming teeth -- here was the aspect of a common village bully, but one who the fortunes of war had transformed into a dangerous overlord. Abdul Kashal was a smuggler. He profited on the inability of honest people to get their wares to market. And as if getting rich on their backs wasn't enough, he also dealt in precious stones and opium.

"Jump to it, then, you old wretch," Kashal growled. "Where are the donkeys? Where's my transport?"

Hasham shifted his weight from one foot to the other. He'd received no request for donkeys, not from Kashal or anyone else. He responded the only way he could, with great caution. "Sahib, if only you had sent someone..."

"Send someone? A messenger perhaps? To you, old man?" He started laughing. His young gunmen laughed, too. They were a slovenly gang, poorly dressed, and their eyes were dull with hashish.

Shakoor looked squarely at Kashal and said: "It's not too much for my friend to ask. He's a working man, and a better man than most."

Kashal's laughter trailed off. He eyed Shakoor scornfully, up and down. "You, countryman – I'll have some of that fish while we wait for your friend here to bring the pack animals." He pointed at the truck. "There are forty bales of wool in there. We need to get them all to the other side no later than two hours before dusk. Our buyers have to load up and be gone by nightfall."

Shakoor's and Hasham's eyes met momentarily. This was very interesting: heavy goods, destined for the Taliban zone. "As you wish, Sahib," Hasham said with an obedient nod, "it will be done."

"Of course it will," Kashal sneered. "Just be sure it's done on time." He turned his back on them and swaggered off towards the teahouse. His men scuffled along behind.

Shakoor said: "How could Massoud let a pig like that prey on people?"
"Trade before all," Hasham said, quoting the age-old maxim of the Afghans. Warily, he repeated the words: "Trade before all."

"Before dignity, before honor?" Shakoor said. "This is black business. It's nothing but the business of war." They both knew the excuses used to justify black marketeering. Massoud's movement had been starved of foreign aid. The Taliban, meantime, had wealthy Arab backers and they controlled most of Afghanistan's poppy production. But the corruption of Taliban chieftains provided opportunities Massoud could exploit. He tolerated war traders and speculators among his own people because taxing their transactions brought money to the cause. So it was that brutes like Kashal prospered.

"Before the war, in the King's time," Shakoor said, "the likes of Abdul Kashal would have been given their bread through the bars of a jail cell. When will we ever see justice again? When will all the Kashals and Omars get the punishment they deserve?"

Hasham said nothing. He was standing very still, and gazing in the direction of the road south. Shakoor said: "Hasham? What's come over you?"

Still no reply.

"Listen to me Hasham, you mustn't take what I said to heart. Don't take that fighting talk too seriously. I was blabbering like a fool. You were right, it's not for us to deal with the warlords. We're simple men."

"Yes. Simple men." Hasham took a deep breath, showed Shakoor an unsettling kind of smile, and turned to go.

"What are you going to do?" Shakoor said.

"Get the man his donkeys. Move his wares."

"Are you sure? You look strange to me."

"No, I'm feeling fine now. Really. Your fish has given me strength. Restored me."

Shakoor watched his friend walk away. The donkey trudged along behind. There was a ripple of laughter from the teahouse steps. Two of Kashal's thugs leaned in the doorway watching Hasham as he walked along the dry creek bed. One of them yelled: "We want to take everything in one trip, old man, so bring plenty of your four-legged children."

More crude laughter. Hasham kept walking. And he did so, Shakoor thought, with a more sprightly, resolute stride than he'd noticed from his old friend for a long, long time.

* * *

Two hours later, Hasham was goading a train of donkeys across no-man's-land. There was a good deal of traffic on the road. Most people were heading north, passing the other way, and at the narrow bends in the road Hasham had to push his animals far to one side so that the travelers could get by.

It was the usual parade. An elderly woman with a bloody eye-patch, her daughter urging her along towards the Red Cross clinic. A group of mothers with their sacks of belongings and flocks of children. And two mysterious tribesmen, proud and neatly dressed, who avoided eye contact with passers-by. Men of power, no doubt. Arranging one of the larger black market deals of the day. Hasham cursed them beneath his breath.

He had managed to round up 18 animals. The donkeys strained under the big loads on their backs. This cargo was wool and blankets, according to Kashal. Hasham suspected that packets of contraband were hidden inside, opium from Badakhshan, or rubies from Panjshir. Other travelers eyed the convoy inquisitively. Hasham responded with smiles and salaams, but that was all. Any conversation about the goods he left to his customer.

In the absence of Abdul Kashal, who would never expose himself to the perils of no-man's-land, "customer" meant the four henchmen sent to guard the shipment. Two of these walked in front of the donkeys, two behind. None were armed; all were red-eyed and stupid with hashish.

Hasham had detected in one of the boys an eagerness to take charge over the others. This miscreant was the stockiest and easily the ugliest of the group. His gait mimicked the strutting arrogance of his master, and he insisted on being at the front of the procession. Even there, he took pains to stay at least a half-stride ahead of his drowsy companion. Hasham recognized this display of competitive hooliganism for what it was: weakness, born of conceit. The old man began conceiving a plan.

As the procession approached the bend in the road that marked the half-way point, the time had come to put his scheme to work. He quickened his pace and began slapping the backsides of the lead animals, urging them to hurry. This had the desired effect. The lead thug looked over his shoulder and grumbled: "What's the matter, old man?"

"Time is the matter. I've had one beating from these Talibs today – it'll take time to unload and reload all these goods. They'll tell us we're too late and close the crossing. They'll send us back; make us take everything with us. We'd have to start all over again in the morning."

The boy sneered. "They'll do nothing of the kind, old man. We're in charge of this shipment." He glanced at the ruffian beside him. "We'll decide who gets beaten and when, not the Talibs." Both of them cackled and cast derisive glances at Hasham.

"Forgive me for speaking out of turn," Hasham said. "I'm sure you've made this journey many times more than I have."

There was no response, only footsteps. The boys, Hasham knew, were at that moment doing what passed for thinking in their mean little world. The smaller of the pair, the dim one, had a wristwatch. He looked at it, then held out his arm where the other boy could see the time. It was five o'clock. The dim one asked, "It was dark at eight last night, wasn't it?"

"Earlier," Hasham said. "The sun went down not long after seven."

The bulky boy grabbed the other's arm, checked the watch again.

Hasham said: "Last week the Talibs turned us all back. There were more than twenty of us. We had a good hour's daylight left, but they said we were too late. The chain, they said – the chain had to be secured, and well before dark."

"Shut up old man," said the lead boy. But he was walking faster now and his friend was keeping up. Soon they both began looking over their shoulders. Were any of the donkeys lagging? Were their friends at the back keeping watch?

"I'm sorry," Hasham said, "I know I'm talking too much. You fellows know best. Please excuse a useless old man." With that, Hasham fell silent. He could afford to stay that way, he thought, for at least for another ten minutes or so.

Time passed. The Taliban zone grew nearer. Then, it happened: the lead boy stepped to one side and motioned for his companion to continue on. The would-be commander made a show of inspecting the passing train of animals and their cargo. But gradually he fell into line again and caught up with Hasham. Speaking quietly so the other boy couldn't hear, he said: "You say you made the crossing earlier today?"

"At midday."

"What was the situation?"

Hasham shook his head a little. "There's a new commander over there. All the little Talibs are playing tough, trying to please him. You know how they are."

"Well they can't play that game with us," the boy said, squaring his shoulders. "Besides, Kasha's contact is meeting us. He has important connections. In Kabul, not just Laghman."

"That should help. If his name means anything at all to the gunmen guarding the chain."

The chain was simply that – a length of rusty iron extending waist-high from a tree trunk on one side of the road to a post on the other. At this wretched frontier a handful of Talib fighters made the most of their power over passage. It was and always had been the way an Afghan warlord stamped his authority on a patch of ground. As a means of dividing territory, a simple chain became something truly forbidding, especially to defenseless civilians – or criminals like Kasha's men.

Hasham continued, "it's the guards at the chain that you have to be concerned with. They're the ones who say who can come and go." He stole a look at the face beside him. The boy was clearly preoccupied, now, with the obstacle before them. Perhaps just another little nudge... "Of course, you'll be wanting to cross the chain," Hasham said. "That's the arrangement, am I right?"

"What do you mean?"

"Your meeting point with Kasha's contact. It's beyond the chain, is it?"

Flustered, the boy replied, "We're to stop where the truck is waiting. We're to meet some men there. They'll have the other half of this." He held up part of a 10,000-Afghani note.

"I see. So you're the one paying the tax?"

"What tax?"

"The bribe the Taliban will charge for letting these goods pass."

"There's no tax, you old fool."

"There was at noon today -- I paid it. In money and blood, look here." He lifted the back of his turban, showed the boy the lump on his head.

The boy looked at the wound for some time. Worry began to trouble his brutish features. "We'll pay no bribe. Anyway, I have no money. Kasha gave us nothing."

"Well, then," Hasham said. "I suppose there's one other choice. But it's a brave man who stops short of the chain."

"Short of the chain?" the boy said.

“On this side of the line. But that would mean just piling the goods beside the road and making the truck come to you. That way the other people will have to deal with the Talibs and their tax. They’ll be the ones passing the chain.”

The boy wondered about this. Then he seemed to remember. “That’s it, then. That’s exactly how it’s been arranged.”

“Are you sure?” Hasham said. “If so, Kasha’s got a lot of influence. He must be a very important man.”

“Of course he is. Why else would we be here, now, with such a valuable lot of goods? We wouldn’t be on this road in the first place if Kasha weren’t a strong man.”

“Still, we should ask the Talibs at the chain.”

“Don’t be stupid, old man. We’ll ask them nothing! We need nothing from them.”

“But they’re armed. They have two tanks on the hill above.”

“So what? We’ll place the goods beside the road in full view. Our contact will walk out to meet us. We’ll match the halves of the note and the truck will come to load up. It’s that simple.”

“I think we should go to the chain,” Hasham persisted.

The boy dismissed him with a wave of his hand. “You’ll go where I tell you to go, you old fool.” He stalked on ahead and joined his friend. In a loud voice ringing with authority, he declared how things would go. The two of them strode onward: young men in firm control of their destinies.

Watching them, Hasham felt the cool soothing hand of fate on his brow. For the first time that day he felt his spirits rising. He sensed something wonderful. It was the prospect of contentment, a deep and delicious state of ease. And there was something old and familiar stirring there too, a feeling that had become something of a stranger through the hard years – hope.

From that point on, Hasham had only to place one foot after the other. He drew the donkeys to a halt at a convenient place, convenient because there was a spot just a few meters further on, towards the chain, where a motor vehicle could stop to take on a load. There were some hollows and depressions in the sand, but what were a few potholes to a heavy vehicle like a truck? Surely it was a safe and secure place. It was so close to the chain. Land mines? No, no. This section of roadway must have been checked and rechecked for mines long ago.

Hasham loosened the ropes and arranged the heavy bundles on the roadside. Kasha’s thugs stood there, watching. As did the Taliban guards behind their precious chain, twenty meters away.

When the last of the bundles was unloaded, the lead boy told Hasham to take his donkeys and go. Kasha would pay for his services when he, Kasha, saw fit. The old man did as he was told. He flailed his switch and waved his arms at the donkeys until their plodding procession pointed the way back home. Meanwhile, a truck bearing the markings of the Taliban army pulled up at the chain. It was Kasha’s customer, ready to collect his goods.

After that, Hasham succumbed to the urge to look back only once. It happened where the road turned sharply north – his last chance to get a clear view of the crossing. By now the truck had crossed the chain and was parked in the appointed place. Loading had commenced, but it was going slowly and there was a lot of shouting going on. A disagreement, perhaps? A falling out over the spoils? Hasham turned and walked on, steadily but not quickly.

He was half way through no-man’s-land when the explosion rolled across the valley. The vibration rose up from the earth and reached as high as the old man’s knees. The echo of the blast shook the still evening air for a very long time. Then there were bursts of machine-gun fire. Bad luck, Hasham thought: Kasha’s young thugs had

lingered too long, posing like the hard men they wished they could be. Only when the Talibs discovered the mine crater would they realize that the goods had not been booby-trapped after all, and that the four northerners, delivering the load, had not been responsible for the explosion. It had just been an old mine, laying in wait for the careless, for the greedy.

Hasham moved more quickly now. Even the donkeys clip-clopped along with their heads up as if craving the comfort of home. What to tell Kasha? His customer, after all, deserved an explanation. Then again, there was only one place he'd find one. At the chain. Go see for yourself, Hasham would tell the warlord. He, a poor old man with his donkeys, knew nothing.

Anyway, there was more important business for Hasham to attend to. He was hungry. His appetite had returned, like a close friend absent too long. Maybe Shakoor had a few more fish to fry for a brother. After a day like this, how delicious they would taste. Hasham walked on. The donkeys followed.

Lesson #2: Political, Economic and Social Conditions in Afghanistan

The purpose of this lesson is to have students conduct an inquiry into the current political, economic, and social conditions in Afghanistan.

Key Topics:

- The impact of change – economic, political and social
- Economic changes currently affecting Afghanistan
- The impact of change on the quality of life and standard of living in Afghanistan pre-Taliban, during the Taliban, and post-Taliban.
- Human Rights
- Women’s Rights
- Education
- Development

Use a K*W*L format to explore the topic.

K*W*L. What do you know? What do you need to learn to become an expert on the subject? What did you learn?

Students should choose a specific topic from the Key Topics or the class can work collectively on one or more of the topics, or groups can be assigned one component.

K*W*L Approach: An Explanation

Afghanistan is a country undergoing constant and rapid change. This lesson is an appropriate way for Social Studies teachers to deal with some of the topics in this unit. It is also a great way to start a mini-unit on Afghanistan at the high school level.

The K*W*L approach is a strategy for reading informational material in Language Arts that has been adapted for Social Studies teachers. It is a powerful strategy that takes the student from what he or she knows about a topic (K), to the development of questions by students themselves to guide research (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?), and finally, to a summation of what has been learned (L).

- **K** – What do you know about this topic? (Can be divided into sub-categories.)
- **W** – What do you need to know about this topic? (Questions developed by students – may also be divided into sub-categories.)
- **L** – What have you learned about this topic (and corresponding sub-categories)?

The power of the K*W*L approach comes from the fact that students develop their *own* questions for research and are therefore generally more motivated to seek out the answers. Students decide to learn about a particular topic, problem, or issue.

Procedure

1. Sketch/draw a large retrieval chart on the overhead or blackboard, or in PowerPoint, as illustrated below.

K	W	L
What do you know about _____? • _____ • _____ • _____	What do you need to know about _____? • _____ • _____ • _____	What have you learned about _____? • _____ • _____ • _____

2. In a large group discussion, have students contribute **what they think they know** about the topic being examined. You may have to sub-categorize ideas depending on the topic, problem or issue chosen. Write ideas under the headings on the blackboard or overhead, or in your PowerPoint presentation. Students should write these in their notebooks as well.
3. Discuss the results of their collective knowledge. In general, students will see that their knowledge about the given topic is limited.
4. Ask students what they might need to know about a particular topic to understand it more fully. Ask them to phrase their ideas in the form of questions (five Ws and How). Avoid rhetorical questions and “would”, “could”, “should”. List these under the W heading on the presentation format that you are using – blackboard, overhead, or LCD player. **Accept all questions** (unless they are repeated or rephrased versions of questions already on the list). Students list these under W in their notebooks.
5. Students have developed a list of questions that will help them find out more about the topic. They will now carry out their own investigation (using materials provided by the teacher and/or through library research) to find the answers to their questions.
6. Have students find the answers to their questions individually or in groups. Have them share the results of their research after an appropriate period of time. (What did they learn about the topic?) Together, they should be able to find the majority of answers to their research questions. Answers should be put under the “L” column in their notebooks. They should compare their new knowledge with what they thought they knew about it initially (K).

7. Have students use what they have learned about their topic in some meaningful way. They could choose an aspect of their new knowledge to make a presentation to class: write a report, essay or position paper, or develop a chronology (timeline) of events.

Development Activities

1. Students will be using questions to acquire more knowledge about the current economic, political, and social situation in Afghanistan. Each student should attempt to find as many answers to the questions as possible.
2. Have students conduct their research. Three general approaches might be taken:
 - a. The teacher provides all resources to use in the classroom (print and non-print).
 - b. The students use library and internet resources to conduct all research.
 - c. Students use a combination of teacher-prepared resources, internet and library resources.
3. Organize students into groups of four. Have them share the answers they have found. Encourage them to add new and additional information to their own information.
4. In a large group discussion, compare their research findings (L) with what they thought they knew about the topic (K). How has their understanding of the topic changed as a result of their research? What did they learn about research questions? How important are they in the search for information?

Culminating Activities

1. Organize students in pairs. Together, they choose one aspect of their research that they found interesting, and prepare a 5 to 10 minute presentation for the class that includes the following:
 - a. Introduction – a brief explanation of their topic and reasons why they chose it.
 - b. Body – detailed information about the topic (Afghanistan from 1979 to the present).
 - c. Conclusion – predictions of changes related to their topic that they feel will occur in the next year, with reasons to support their predictions.
 - d. Visual support (diagrams, maps, time-lines, pictures, audio)

Evaluation

1. Research process (self evaluation).
2. Presentation.

Lesson #3 Significant Figures in Afghanistan's History and Today

This lesson gives students an opportunity to research the lives of significant figures in Afghanistan's history and today.

Materials

The teacher will gather and organize materials in association with the school librarian. Students will use the internet sources provided, books (consult the suggested reading list), and periodicals. There are also a number of resources suggested in the website www.w4wafghan.ca.

Procedure/Methodology/Development Activities/Culminating Activities: Please follow the link suggested below to complete this lesson/assignment.

Time: Three to four 70-minute classes

Historical Biography

To complete this assignment, students will use the format as created by Dr. Jamie McKenzie. Dr. McKenzie is a leading figure in technology and education in the United States. He is a recognized leader in the field and has presented workshops around the world. This online assignment is excellent, and very easy to follow. The format is found at the website www.bham.wednet.edu/bio/biomak2.htm. This should take you to a page entitled, "The Biography Maker". It will give students who are comfortable with technology an opportunity to complete an assignment using the internet. That does not mean you should ignore books – in fact, students are urged to use the library and other resources to completed assignment. They should use some of the websites and books suggested in this resource to help them in this assignment. Teachers are encouraged to go to this site well ahead of the planned assignment.

Possible figures to research:

General Rashid Dostum, Abdul Gul, Abdul Haq, Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, Malalai Joya, Hamid Karzai, Ishmael Khan, Ahmad Shah Masood, Mohammad Najibullah, Amir Mullah Mohammed Omar, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Dr. Sima Samar, King Zahir Shah.

Lesson #4 - The Taliban's Violation of Human Rights in Afghanistan

This lesson will allow students to illustrate, in writing, their understanding of changes in human rights experienced by Afghan people under extremist groups, such as the Taliban.

Activity #1

In groups or individually complete the following:

- Research the Taliban in Afghanistan
- Describe the human rights situation under the Taliban
- Compare life under the Taliban to life in Canada and other democracies
- Identify the reasons for the Taliban gaining control of Afghanistan

Activity #2 – RAFT Assignment

RAFT Assignment: Role, Audience, Form, Tense. This is a creative writing assignment where students assume the role of an individual in any event that has occurred in Afghanistan pre-, during and post-Taliban.

RAFT Assignment Explanation

The letters RAFT refer to a writing strategy that attempts to take students out of their present roles and into the roles of others. The students assume the role of someone. This will complement participation in the role-play game (Appendix B). It provides a transition for the students from a “game” to a writing assignment. This assignment allows students to be creative, and take on roles they had in the game or a character with whom they strongly identified. The tense of the assignment could be past, present or maybe even the future.

One way to make activities of all kinds more appealing is to vary the role, audience, format, and tense for students in writing assignments.

- R** – Role (journalist, Talib, farmer, school girl/boy)
- A** – Audience (readers, colleagues, self)
- F** – Format (letter, journal, report, diary, news article)
- T** – Tense (past, present, future)

Materials

The teacher will need to have: a copy of the interactive/role playing simulation game; Class copies of any of Deborah Ellis’ books, “The Breadwinner,” “Parvana’s Journey,” or “Mud City”; or copy of the film/DVD, “Osama”.

Procedure

1. Complete the interactive/role play game.
2. Debrief the game.
3. Explain the RAFT assignment to the students.
4. Allow the students to assume a role.
5. Begin the assignment.
6. Hand in the completed work for evaluation.

Time: One to three 70-minute classes

Evaluation

RAFT Assignment:

Category	Exc. 5	Good 4	Sat. 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
Content (max. 10 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accuracy• Completeness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Organization (max. 5 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of writing errors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Role/Audience (max. 10 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role addressed throughout• Audience addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Total: _____ / 25

Activity # 3 - Current Events Scrapbook

Scrapbooks help students organize and present large amounts of information on a particular subject – in this instance, Afghanistan. It is possible to follow a set of events; for example, the election in Afghanistan in the fall of 2004. You could easily link to the websites listed in this resource and others to follow an event of this significance. Teachers could also simply follow the developments taking place in Afghanistan for a set period of time. This could be anywhere from a week to one month, or longer if desired.

Key Topics

- Document the political, economic, cultural or social issues in Afghanistan
- Compare Afghanistan today with Afghanistan under the Taliban
- Describe the changing role of the multi-national NATO forces in general, or the Canadian forces in particular in Afghanistan

Materials

The teacher will need to provide appropriate internet sites, periodicals, articles, books, and other resources for the students. The librarian should have files, periodicals, and links that the students can use.

Procedure

1. Inform the students that they will be doing a research/scrapbook assignment over a set period of time or number of classes.
2. Explain why you have chosen Afghanistan, and its relevance to other material in your course of study.
3. Take the students to one of the websites either in a computer lab or via an LCD player in the classroom. Explain that they will be following events in Afghanistan for the period of time selected by the teacher.
4. The rest of the procedure is explained in the **General Information** provided below.

General Information for Using Scrapbook Assignments: An Explanation

- A. Decide on the rationale for the study and objectives to be achieved by the students. Use the following questions to assist you:
 - What is the purpose of this activity?
 - What knowledge will students acquire?
 - What skills will students explore?
- B. Develop a plan for conducting the study, using the answers to the above questions. Be sure to include evaluation in your plan. Develop an assignment for students to complete. Is it going to be web-based, or hard copy-based via “old fashioned” scrapbooks using newspapers, magazines, etc?
- C. Begin collecting resources well in advance of beginning the scrapbook activity. Work with your librarian and/or teacher assistant, and bookmark relevant websites.
- D. Obtain scrapbooks if you are going to do this as a hard copy project, or make sure that every student is able to develop his/her own website, or create a PowerPoint presentation – ask students all of this before you assign this project. If this is done as a hard copy project you will require glue, rulers, scissors, and other supplies.
- E. Teach or review applicable research skills. These might include searching the web, finding information in newspapers and periodicals, or library research skills such as using vertical files and periodical indexes. Ask the librarian for help.
- F. Carefully explain the scrapbook assignment to students. Outline procedures and clarify “rules” related to the research activity (e.g., will students be able to use photocopied articles?).
- G. Work closely with students as they complete the activity in the classroom, computer lab, and library. Again, enlist the aid of the librarian and teacher assistants.
- H. Debrief. What knowledge did students acquire as a result of the activity? Skills? Attitudes?
- I. Evaluate the process and the scrapbooks.

Scoring

The following two pages provide sample scoring tools for the scrapbook project.

Evaluation: Current Events Scrapbook

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Total Marks: _____/40

Content: 10 8 6 4 2

Accuracy – All content throughout the assignment/presentation is accurate.

There are no factual errors. Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate. The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate. Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.

Originality: 10 8 6 4 2

Presentation shows considerable originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in a unique and interesting way. Presentation shows some originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in an interesting way. Presentation shows an attempt at originality and inventiveness on 1-2 cards. Presentation is a rehash of other people's ideas and/or graphics and shows very little attempt at original thought.

Spelling and Grammar: 10 8 6 4 2

Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors. Presentation has one or two misspellings, but no grammatical errors. Presentation has one or two grammatical errors but no misspellings. Presentation has more than two grammatical and/or spelling errors.

Effectiveness: 10 8 6 4 2

Project includes all material needed to gain a comfortable understanding of the topic. It is a highly effective study guide. Project includes most material needed to gain a comfortable understanding of the material but is lacking one or two key elements. It is an adequate study guide. Project is missing more than two key elements. It would make an incomplete study guide. Project is lacking several key elements and has inaccuracies that make it a poor study guide.

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Clear expression of ideas	- communicates information as isolated pieces in a random fashion	- communicates important information but not a clear theme or overall structure	- clearly communicates main idea, theme or point of view	- clearly and effectively communicates main idea, theme, or viewpoint.
Content	articles & images lack relevancy to theme	articles & images are somewhat relevant to theme	articles & images are mostly relevant to theme	all articles and images are highly relevant to theme
Evidence of Research	- little evidence of research in product	- text and/or symbols show some evidence of research	- text and symbols show clear evidence of research	- text and symbols show evidence of considerable research
Effective use of colour ,symbols and graphics	- colour and/or symbols and graphics unclear	- colours and/or symbols and graphics not clearly supportive of the theme	- colours and/or symbols and graphics support theme of poster	- the message or purpose is obvious to the audience through the use of colour and symbols
Effective use of text and/or captions	- text minimally displayed and purpose unclear	- text is clearly displayed but does not support theme or message	- text supports the purpose of the poster	- text or caption delivers the message with impact
Overall impact and creativity	- limited effort in presentation is shown; visuals and texts do not match each other in quality; limited innovation and appeal to the eye	- visuals and texts are clear though their connection may not be obvious to the audience; design may show a hint of the unusual or innovative	- effort and thoughtful preparation clearly shown with elements of innovation in the caption or in the visual components	- the combination of visuals and text make for an eye-catching design with powerful impact

Additional Topics for Exploration

1. Women's Groups in Afghanistan and affiliated Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Students can learn more about groups such as *Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan*, and affiliated groups like *PARSA*, the *Shuhada Foundation*, and many more. This might also provide an impetus for young people at the high school level to get involved in human rights issues.

2. The Role of other Nations

Investigate the role of the United States, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, India, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, and/or Saudi Arabia in relation to the Taliban's rise in Afghanistan. Why did this group adopt such a fundamentalist stance in Afghanistan? What are the origins of this group? How did they gain so much support?

3. Focus on Specific Time Period

This can be done from 1979 to the present, or as an historical timeline, beginning at any time in Afghanistan's history. Center the assignment on the following questions: Who? What? When? Why? Where? How? Focus on a specific time period in Afghanistan's history.

4. Book Review

Select a book from the suggested list and write a critique on it.

5. Essay/Position Paper

Students are asked to research one of the following topics. They take a stand and defend a position on one of the issues; the following are examples:

- To what extent has the history of Afghanistan contributed to the current state of Afghanistan?
- To what extent are human rights integral for the development of Afghanistan?
- To what extent does Geopolitics influence events in Afghanistan?
- How will the improvement of women's rights in Afghanistan, and any country in general, contribute to the nation's economy?

6. Physical/Social Geography Application

A variety of lessons can be built around Geography, Environment, Ecology, Flora, Fauna and Geopolitics.

7. Cultural Focus

Afghanistan as a Multi-Cultural Society. Lessons and/or activities can be developed which focus on a specific cultural aspect such as: Tribes, Cultures, Religions, Food, Economy, or Government.

Extension Activities. As a class you might hold a multicultural evening, or host a “Breaking Bread for Afghan Women” potluck dinner (visit the website <http://www.breakingbreadforwomen.com>) and invite members of Canadian Women for Women Afghanistan to your class or school. Have members of the Afghan community come to your class and talk about the diversity of Afghan society and culture.

8. Cooperative Learning Assignment

A Cooperative Learning Assignment can be applied to pre-Taliban, during the Taliban, and post-Taliban (reconstruction) Students could assume a variety of roles/movements that have taken place in Afghanistan over the past 100 years. The British/Russia Conflict (Great Game), The Cold War players, Soviet Invasion (1979) and Soviet-backed regimes, Civil War (1994-1996), the rise of the Taliban, Women's Issues during the Taliban regime in comparison to women's roles pre-Taliban, Afghanistan post 9-11-01 and women, men, government, the UN, NATO, NGOs.

Book List for Teachers

- Ansary, Tamim. West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan American Story.
- Ahmedi, Farah and Tamim Ansary. The Story of My Life: An Afghan Girl on the Other Side of the Sky.
- Armstrong, Sally. Veiled Threat: The Hidden Power of the Women of Afghanistan.
- Bernard, Cheryl. Veiled Courage: Inside the Afghan Women's Resistance.
- Brodsky, Anne E. With all our Strength.
- Burke, Jason. Al Qaeda.
- Chavis, Melody and Ermachild, Meena. Heroine of Afghanistan: the Martyr who founded RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan.
- Chayes, Sarah. The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban.
- Crile, George. Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History
- Cristofari, Rita and Follain, John. Zoya's Story: An Afghan Woman's Struggle for Freedom.
- Elliot, Jason. An Unexpected Light.
- Ellis, Deborah. The Breadwinner.
- Ellis, Deborah. Parvana's Journey.
- Ellis, Deborah. Mud City.
- Ellis, Deborah. Women of the Afghan War.
- Fisher Staples, Suzanne. Under the Persimmon Tree.
- Hosseini, Khaled. The Kite Runner.
- Hosseini, Khaled. A Thousand Splendid Suns.
- Huntington, Samuel P. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.
- Kaplan, Robert D. Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Khadra, Yasmina (Moulessehoul Khadra real name). The Swallows of Kabul.
- Kremmer, Christopher. The Carpet Wars: From Kabul to Baghdad.
- Lamb, Christina. The Sewing Circles of Heart: A Personal Voyage Through Afghanistan
- Latifa. My Forbidden Face: Growing Under the Taliban: A Young Woman's Story.
- Logan, Harriet. Unveiled: Voices of Women in Afghanistan.
- Lubbers, Ruud and Zalmi. Return, Afghanistan / Retour, Afghanistan

Mehta, Sunita. Women for Women Afghanistan: Shattering Myths and Claiming the Future.

Mortenson, Greg. Three Cups of Tea.

Newby, Eric. A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush.

Pazira, Nelofer. A Bed of Red Flowers: In Search of My Afghanistan.

Pigott, Peter. Canada in Afghanistan: The War So Far.

Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban.

Rashid, Ahmed. Jihad: The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism in Central Asia.

Schultheis, Rob. Night Letters: Inside Wartime Afghanistan.

Schwartz, Stephen. The Two Faces of Islam: Saudi Fundamentalism and Its Role in Terrorism.

Seierstad, Asne. The Bookseller of Kabul.

Shah, Saira. The Storyteller's Daughter.

Sulima, Hala and Batya Swift, Yasgur. Behind the Burqa: Our Life in Afghanistan and How We Escaped to Freedom.

Film List

- Kandahar
- Return to Kandahar
- Osama
- Five O'clock in the Afternoon
- Daughters of Afghanistan