

2007/08 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Target "Design for All" Award



SHAFIQ AHMADI
Architecture
Graduate Student
Academy of Art University

I was born in 1973 to a family of seven children in Kabul, Afghanistan. My father worked as a mechanic with a ninth grade education and my mother was a stay-at-home-mom with a seventh grade education. By the time several of my brothers were ready to go to high school in 1983 we fled the country on foot for four days and nights to reach Pakistan with little money.

In Pakistan none of us were able to go to school due to financial difficulties. My father and my eldest brother worked as day laborers and soon we had enough money to move to the capital city of Islamabad. Once there, my father continued to work as a day laborer while my two older brothers found a housekeeping job with a diplomat. Life was getting better; I too was earning money for the family. From time to time when we had money, my father would make us colorful kites to fly and soon we started to sell very elaborately designed kites to the rest of the neighborhood. It was around this time when I noticed that I had an eye for design.



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the professional association for design

SHAFIQ AHMADI

Architecture

In 1987 – by a long shot – we made it to America and soon all of us were enrolled in school. Going to school was more of a challenge for us than anyone else, since we lost four years of schooling while in Pakistan, and my parents did not have the time to teach us anything. The class that helped me the most with English was art class. Drawing and painting made me feel at ease enough to listen to other students in order to learn English, which worked very well for me.

Between 1992 and 2001, I attended community college, the Art Institute of Seattle and Cornish College of Design. With a BFA in product design, I have worked as designer and I am currently teaching design at the Academy of Art University.

All of these life experiences, from the days of poverty in Pakistan until now – where I am an accomplished instructor at a college – have shaped who I am. I would now like to push myself even further to get a Masters in Architecture, so that I can help my community. I have a great fondness for green architecture and design. I wonder about the kinds of problems the next generation will face if we don't take action now. As an architect with better knowledge of green architecture and design I would like to educate students at middle and high school levels. I truly believe that we need to have early education in order to get our immediate community involved.

I also intend to do some architecture work in the war-torn country of Afghanistan. I believe that I can have an impact on the lives of the people there. My plan is to work with University students to help them gain the knowledge and skills to build temporary housing for the millions of refugees and displaced people coming back from neighboring countries. In return, this will generate much needed jobs. I am confident of accomplishing these goals. With the help of this scholarship I will be able to achieve my academic goal of a Masters in Architecture sooner.

