



IPS/NUA HOOPOE BOOK PROJECT

July 2001-June 2002

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In July 2001, the Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge (ISHK) -- Hoopoe Books' parent organization -- gave a grant to the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and the National Urban Alliance (NUA) consisting of:

- > 10,000 copies of *The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water*
- > 5,000 copies of *The Magic Horse*
- > 110 sets of flat sheets that were to be made into "panel books" for *The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water*

These books were not just given to the Indianapolis school system -- they were distributed to children for them to keep! Ten thousand students in kindergarten through third grade received a copy of *The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water*, and five thousand fourth and fifth graders were given a copy of *The Magic Horse*.

In addition to donating the books, the NUA included a packet to be given to classroom teachers. The packet contained a map of Afghanistan, information on Afghanistan and Afghan author Idries Shah, a teaching manual for *The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water*, and a questionnaire about the book project. Students and teachers were also directed to related Web sites.

An important feature of this program was that the children could continue exploring and enjoying their books outside of the classroom. In many cases, these were the first books that these young people had ever owned. Allowing students to develop a sense of pride in book ownership is a first step in helping them learn to love reading and to enjoy high-quality literature.

PROJECT RESULTS

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the least), the teachers rated how the students enjoyed the books, whether they would use the books again, and how important it was that the students could keep the books. The average scores were:

- > 4.54 for *The Lion Who Saw Himself In the Water*
- > 4.59 for *The Magic Horse*

The questionnaire also asked the teachers what types of activities they employed in conjunction with using the books -- such as storytelling, read-alouds, creative drama, stimulus for writing/drawing, and teaching reading skills -- and how much time they spent using the books and materials. The results were very positive, with some teachers devoting as much as a week working with the books, focusing on a different activity each day. Given the amount of pressure these teachers are under to stick to their curriculum, this was encouraging news.

Teachers' Comments

"Owning the books is really important. The children carried their books back and forth from home to school and read with partners. It also gave us a chance to discuss life in Afghanistan and how normal people live there- and how the war affects not only people, but facets of life." --First grade teacher, School #14

"The look and excitement on my students' faces, when I told them they would be able to keep the books as their own, was worth a million dollars. Grants of this kind are so important because they put good quality books in the hands of our children." --Second grade teacher, School #46

"We loved the story! The illustrations were beautiful. Thanks so much for the books." --Second grade teacher, School #92

"Great book for writing/illustrating how we can handle our fears." --First grade teacher, School #46

"Colorful illustrations, easy to read, inviting." --Second grade teacher, School #14

Children's Comments

"My favorite part is when the lion Grrrrred and all the animals ran. It is my favorite part because they saw their animal friends run and they ran too." --Second grade student

"My favorite part is when the lion thought the reflection was about to eat him. Thank you for giving me a book I can take home." --Second grade student

"My favorite part is when he roared in the jungle. It is my favorite part because I like to roar." --First grade student