



# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023

**Unisfere Foundation**

*Together Towards Sustainable Development*

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*Empowering Afghan Youth Through Academic Research*

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# 1. Forward

2023 was Unisfere first full operational year, and it was defined by one proof of concept: that Afghan youth, given structure, mentorship, and a platform, will produce rigorous academic research on the challenges facing their own communities.

We launched the first Unisfere Research Fellowship with no external funding, no institutional backing, and no guarantee of uptake. What we had was a clear mission, a network of internationally based volunteer mentors, and a founding team that believed the work was necessary. The response from Afghan youth exceeded our expectations. Fellows engaged seriously with research methodology, worked with their mentors across time zones, and submitted studies on issues ranging from water scarcity to girls' education.

This report is an account of what we did and what it cost. The financial section shows a single line of income: €500, self-funded by the founder and chairperson, Mohammad Tahir Ghori. There were no grants, no institutional donors, and no surplus. What it demonstrates is that meaningful work can begin at zero, but also that it cannot scale without support.

We share this report as a transparent record of our first year, and as an invitation to the partners and funders who can help us do more.

Mohammad Tahir Ghori

Founder and Chairperson, Unisfere Foundation

## 2. Contact Information

Organisation	Unisfere Foundation
Status (2023)	Independent non-governmental initiative (formally registered as Stichting Unisfere in the Netherlands in September 2025)
Founded	2022
Website	<a href="http://www.unisfere.com">www.unisfere.com</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:info@unisfere.com">info@unisfere.com</a> / <a href="mailto:fellowship@unisfere.com">fellowship@unisfere.com</a>
Phone	0031 683090727
Social media	Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn (@Unisfere)
Area of work	International — primary focus: Afghanistan
Target group	Afghan youth and young professionals (under 35)

## Board (2023)

Name	Role
Mohammad Tahir Ghori	Founder and Chairperson
Jamilurahman Monir	Co-Founder and Secretary
Noor Ahmad Yaqubi	Co-Founder and Treasurer

## 3. Who We Are

Unisfere is an independent, non-governmental initiative dedicated to sustainable development. Founded in 2022, our goal is to contribute to the implementation and localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through youth empowerment, research, public awareness, and knowledge-sharing.

*Vision:* To be a catalyst for positive change by fostering impactful research, building capacity, and empowering individuals and organizations to create sustainable, informed solutions for a better tomorrow.

*Mission:* At Unisfere, our mission is to bridge gaps between local and global communities by promoting research, sharing knowledge, and empowering youth and professionals with the tools and skills they need to tackle pressing challenges and unlock opportunities for sustainable development.

Aims:

- Deliver accessible, high-quality research training to Afghan youth who lack pathways to academic participation
- Generate locally grounded, evidence-based research on community challenges across Afghanistan
- Connect Afghan researchers with international mentors and academic networks
- Publish fellow research to inform policy, development interventions, and public discourse
- Localise the UN SDGs based on evidence produced by fellows
- Cultivate a long-term pipeline of young Afghan researchers

## 4. Unisfere in 2023 — Structure and Team

In 2023, Unisfere operated as a lean, volunteer-run initiative. There were no paid staff. All coordination, facilitation, mentorship matching, and program delivery was carried out voluntarily.

### Board:

Name	Role	Background
<b>Mohammad Tahir Ghori</b>	Founder and Chairperson	Urban Water Management and Climate Adaptation Advisor
<b>Jamilurahman Monir</b>	Co-Founder and Secretary	Water and sustainable development professional
<b>Noor Ahmad Yaqubi</b>	Co-Founder and Treasurer	Researcher in hydro-climatic extremes

### Volunteer Program Coordinators:

Name	Role	Background
<b>Wazir Armin</b>	Executive and Country Director – Afghanistan	IS/IT Audit Expert
<b>Azizollah Rezaie</b>	Executive Director	Education development expert (SDG 4); Programs Director, VDO
<b>Shahpoor Mutafaker</b>	Communications and PR Coordinator	Law and Political Science; manages Joya Professional Learning Center
<b>Marwa Alam Safa</b>	Outreach Coordinator	Environmental specialist; founder of CEYI; Kabul University
<b>Arif Alkozay</b>	Fellowship Coordinator – Academic	Civil Engineering; former Research Coordinator, Herat University
<b>Aliya Haidary</b>	Fellowship Coordinator – Public Outreach	Master of Education; M&E Officer, international organisation

All team members served on a fully voluntary basis. No remuneration was paid to any board member, coordinator, or mentor.

## 5. Projects and Activities

### 5.1. Research Fellowship 2023 - Overview

The Unisfere Research Fellowship is the organisation's flagship program. The 2023 edition was the first cohort, which is a proof-of-concept designed to test whether Afghan youth could produce rigorous academic research under online mentorship, in an environment of severe access limitations.

The fellowship was run in partnership with MSSADO — Mirab Social Services and Development Organisation (a registered Afghan NGO based in Herat with a sub-office in Kabul). MSSADO provided local coordination, participant outreach, and community networks.

## 5.2. Program Structure and Curriculum

The 2023 fellowship ran over nine months across two phases:

Phase	Duration	Content and Output
<b>Phase 1: Workshops</b>	3 months	Intensive online workshops (3 days/week, 1–2 hours/session). Topics: research methodology, academic writing, data analysis, digital skills, SETI, and sustainability. Output: short research proposal.
<b>Phase 2: Mentorship</b>	6 months	Fellows paired with vetted international mentors. Minimum 2 mentor meetings per month. Fellows execute research studies on local sustainability issues. Output: full academic research report.

## 5.3. Participants

The program was open to bachelor's students and recent graduates in Afghanistan, with a focus on SETI, sustainability, and community development. Fellows were selected through an open, merit-based application process.

Indicator	2023
<b>Fellows enrolled (Phase 1)</b>	Up to 100
<b>Mentors recruited (Phase 2)</b>	15
<b>Program duration</b>	9 months
<b>Publication outlet</b>	Unisfere journal and international journals

## 5.4. Impact and Outcomes

- Fellows received training in research methodology, academic writing, data analysis, and sustainability — skills largely unavailable through formal Afghan university channels under current conditions
- Fellows conducted original field research in their home provinces on issues directly relevant to their communities
- Research studies were submitted for publication in the Unisfere journal and, where quality allowed, in international academic journals
- Fellows received mentorship from international academics, the majority holding PhD degrees, exposing them to global research standards
- The 2023 cohort proved the model: a fully online, volunteer-run, internationally mentored research fellowship operating inside Afghanistan

Research themes addressed by 2023 fellows included water resource management, disaster risk, environmental degradation, girls' access to education, and community health — all aligned with the UN SDGs.

## 6. Financial Report

Unisfere operated with no external funding in 2023. The entire financial foundation of the year was a personal contribution by the founder and chairperson, **Mohammad Tahir Ghori**.

### 6.1. Income

Table 1 Income

Source	Amount
<b>Self-donation — (founder and chairperson)</b>	€ 500.00
<b>External grants</b>	€ 0.00
<b>Institutional contributions</b>	€ 0.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>€ 500.00</b>

### 6.2. Expenditure

Table 2 Expenditure

Item	Amount
<b>Website domain — <a href="http://www.unisfere.com">www.unisfere.com</a> (GoDaddy, annual payment)</b>	€ [X]
<b>Website hosting — <a href="http://www.unisfere.com">www.unisfere.com</a> (GoDaddy, monthly payments)</b>	€ [X]
<b>Zoom platform (online workshop and mentorship sessions)</b>	€ [X]
<b>Social media promotion — call for applications</b>	€ [X]
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>€ 500.00</b>

*The individual line item amounts above need to be completed by the treasurer from payment records. The total is confirmed at €500.*

## 7. Notes

- No remuneration was paid to any board member, coordinator, mentor, or volunteer in 2023
- The program ran entirely on volunteer time; the €500 covered only essential digital infrastructure
- MSSADO provided in-kind support through local coordination and community networks in Afghanistan — not reflected as a financial contribution but material to the program's delivery
- These accounts predate formal Dutch registration (September 2025) and are reported as part of Unisfere's organisational history, not as statutory accounts of Stitching Unisfere

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