

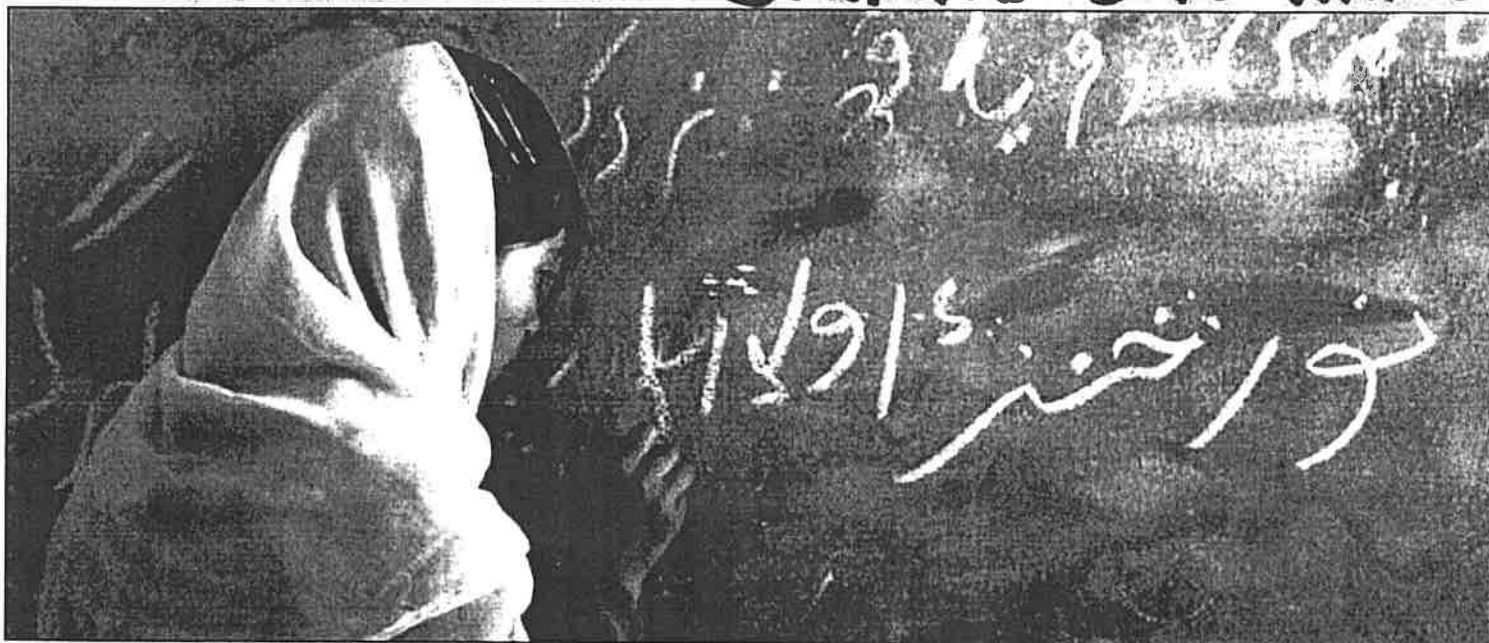
Station 1- Look for question hints- you won't have time to read it all.

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"There is an African proverb I learned as a child in Tanzania, 'If you educate a boy, you educate an individual. But if you educate a girl, you educate a community.'"

- Greg Mortenson

Station 2- do not write on



A seventh-grade student in Afghanistan's remote Wakhan Corridor.

KARIN RONNOW

# Educate girls, change the world

Greg Mortenson and his Central Asia Institute have been promoting education, especially for girls, in remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan for 16 years — yet not a day goes by that someone doesn't ask Mortenson if he's not tempting fate by emphasizing girls' education.

The short answer is rarely. Most of the extremists' attacks occur in places where CAI schools are not.

The long answer is yes, in some places where CAI is working, security is dicey. But from the get-go, CAI staffers spend a lot of time drinking tea and building relationships with local leaders to ensure complete commitment to every school.

"In order to get things done, we often have to deal with a lot of shady people," Mortenson said. "We have to have tea with the Taliban and corrupt government officials, the U.S. military and the visionary imams, and with the despot mullahs who are opposed to education and literacy.

"It's all in a day's work to get the job done and insure that the need to get kids in school is met," he said.

Many cups of tea and sometimes years

later, a school is established and there is no doubt about who owns it — the village does. So when threats do crop up, villagers protect those schools with their lives.

Only one CAI school has ever been attacked by the Taliban, two years ago in Afghanistan. The attackers were shot at, some killed and some arrested, and the girls were back in school within two days. The militia now guard the school day and night and operate under a shoot-to-kill order regarding any militants who threaten a student or teacher.

"It's not how I'd run a school," Mortenson said. "But it's not my school. It's theirs."

*'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.'*

— Nelson Mandela

As for why it's important to take the risk and build girls' schools at all, Mortenson said it's simple. "That is the universal request we hear from women and communities: 'We want schools.'"

But the barriers that keep girls in poor countries out of school are numerous

## MEASURING STICKS

CAI founder Greg Mortenson often points to three areas where increased female literacy makes a difference in a society: infant mortality rates, population growth (just under half of the population in Pakistan and in Afghanistan is under the age of 15, just about to enter childbearing years) and quality of life.

### INFANT MORTALITY RATE

**AFGHANISTAN:** 152 deaths per 1,000 births.

**PAKISTAN:** 65 per 1,000.

**U.S.:** 6.26 per 1,000.

### POPULATION GROWTH

**PAKISTAN:** 180 million people, growing about 2 percent a year.

**AFGHANISTAN:** 28 million people, growing at nearly 3 percent.

**U.S.:** 307 million people, growing at less than 1 percent.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

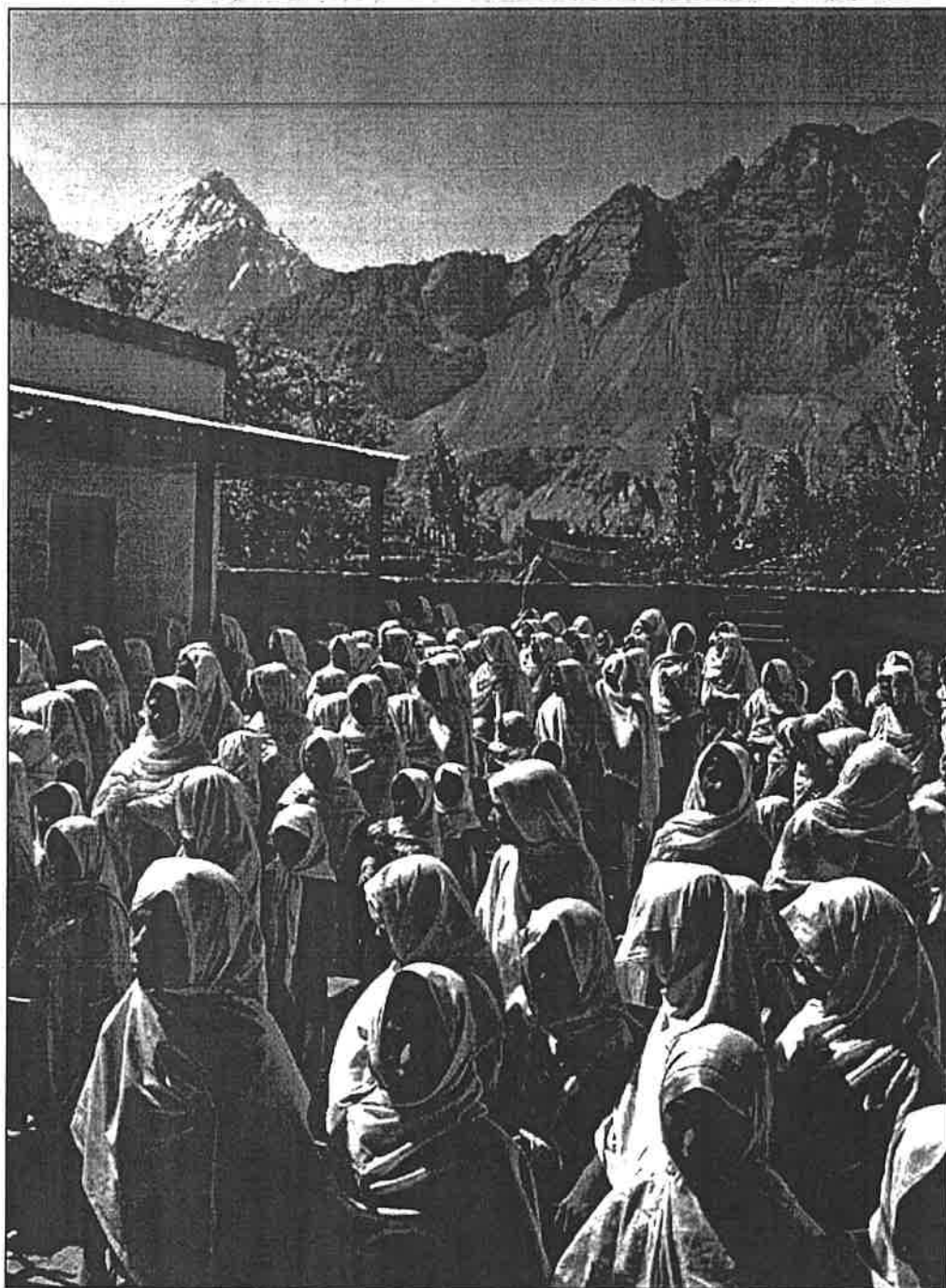
The U.N. Human Poverty Index measures and ranks countries using adult literacy rates, probability of living to age 40, access to clean drinking water and number of underweight children. The higher the number, the better the quality of life.

**AFGHANISTAN:** Dead last on the list; No. 135 out of 135 countries.

**PAKISTAN:** No. 101

**U.S.:** No. 13





## FIVE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL GIRLS' SCHOOLS

The Council on Foreign Relations' "What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World," spells out several key ingredients for successful girls' schools, many of which the Central Asia Institute has incorporated.

### **Build schools close to girls' homes**

School-age children are 10 to 20 percent more likely to attend school if they live in a village with a primary school. Proximity also increases parental involvement.

### **Insist on community involvement**

Community schools tend to meet culture norms and use local language. Community-based schools generally have higher enrollment and quality and lower dropout rates.

### **Build 'girl-friendly' schools**

Girls' schools must have private latrines and boundary walls. In some cases, it's most appropriate to build separate schools for girls.

### **Provide female teachers**

Recruit locally. Even very young women can teach programmed curricula effectively if they are trained and supported.

### **Focus on quality education**

Ensure a school has enough teachers, ongoing teacher training, heavy emphasis on math and science and adequate books and supplies.

**CAI's Gultori Girls' School near Skardu, Baltistan, is the largest girls' school in the region.**

and, in some cases, deeply entrenched.

In Pakistan and Afghanistan, where female literacy rates are at 36 and 13 percent, respectively, according to "The World Factbook," extremists are the most vocal and violent obstructionists. They attack, bomb and burn girls' schools, throw acid in female students' faces and threaten anyone who dares to challenge their edicts to keep women out of public life.

Girls' education is haram, or unIslamic, they say.

But Mortenson said, "Islamic scholars have told me that there is nothing in the Koran to prohibit girls' education."

Experience has taught him that this opposition is rooted not in theology, but in the extremists' recognition that poor, illiterate

communities are far more vulnerable to Taliban offers of money and martyrdom than communities where families are fighting hard to educate their children. After all, educated girls grow up to be educated women who are less likely to let their children join violent extremist movements.

In the Hadith, which is the teachings of Islam, it says, "*The ink of a scholar is holier than the blood of a martyr.*" In other words, "Their greatest fear is not the bullet, but it's the pen," he said. "They fear that if the girl gets an education, grows up and becomes a mother, they'll lose future recruits."

But in these countries, where religion informs almost every aspect of daily life, a growing number of religious leaders are working hard to counter the extremists' anti-

female rhetoric. Syed Hassan Shah, principal of the Federal Government InterCollege Shigar, in Baltistan, Pakistan, is one such leader.

"According to Islam, until women are educated, no good society can be developed," Shah said. "Islam says that education is for both boys and girls and there should be no difference, there should be opportunity for both of them. Another teaching of Islam is that every person should get an education and learning — even if he has to go to China."

When he was starting the college, parents were more than willing to send their boys. Girls were another story. So to help recruit female students, he enlisted the help of his eldest daughter, Tahreem Fatima, who was studying in class 12 in Skardu.

"Nobody was willing to send the girls to the boys' college, so she came to college for one year with the boys," Shah said. "She made a big sacrifice. It was difficult for her. But I am a religious leader, so other parents saw that and said, 'Let us send our daughters also.'"

His strategy worked.

*"I believe that women everywhere share the same dreams: to be educated, to live in peace, to enjoy good health, to be prosperous and to be heard. And, of course, these dreams start with the education of girls."*

— Laura Bush, former first lady

Religion, however, is just the tip of the iceberg. Many, many things conspire to keep girls out of school in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Poverty, for example, also informs all aspects of life for millions in this region. Subsistence living means families often need girls at home to help in the fields, herd livestock or tend to younger siblings. The cost of school fees, books and uniforms sometimes requires families to choose between sending sons or daughters to school, and the boys are often seen as the better choice, due to their ability to get paid work and contribute to the household income down the road.

Another barrier to girls' education is distance. Sometimes the schools that accept girls are just too far away. Parents aren't comfortable having their daughters walk alone for hours each way in rural areas, especially in war zones.

And then there are the seemingly obvious



Older girls in the Lower Chunda School in the Northern Areas turn around to hear the teacher talking to younger students in another grade. The girls are packed tight in the school, which CAI recently adopted.

but often overlooked aspects of the need for privacy and safety at the schools themselves. Parents may not say it, but they want their girls to go to schools with boundary walls and private toilets, especially adolescent girls. And, due to fear of sexual harassment or even violence, they steer clear of schools that employ only male teachers.

*"Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family."*

— Kofi Annan, former U.N. secretary general

When CAI joins with a village to address those concerns and get girls enrolled in school, the outcome is girls who lead richer, more productive lives, contribute to the health and welfare of their families and grow up to raise educated, healthier children.

"In short, there may be no better investment for the health and development of poor countries around the world than investments to educate girls," according to the Council on Foreign Relations' "What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World."

Research has proven that educated girls marry later, have fewer children and those children are less likely to die. Educated girls also contribute to family income, insist their own children are educated, and lead healthier lives.

"We can drop bombs, we can build roads, or we can put in electricity, but unless the girls are educated, the world won't change," Mortenson said.

Conveying that message to parents, Shah said, has become less onerous over time.

"There is already a big difference and the difference is good and positive," he said. "We still have to teach the religious people. And there might be, in the mountains or other places, some people who don't understand. But people are seeking better and better opportunities for their girls, so the change is very good." ■

## RETURNS ON INVESTMENT IN GIRLS' EDUCATION

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

**INCOME GROWTH:** Girls' education leads to increased income for the girls themselves and for nations as a whole. Increasing the share of women with a secondary education by 1 percent boosts annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percent, according to the World Bank. That's significant, since per capita income gains in developing countries seldom exceed 3 percent a year.

**FARM PRODUCTIVITY:** Educated farmers are more efficient and their farms are more productive, which leads to increased crop yields and declines in malnutrition, according to the World Food Program.

### HEALTH BENEFITS

**FERTILITY RATE:** Educated women tend to have fewer babies. A 2000 study in Brazil found that illiterate women had an average of 2.5 children while illiterate women had an average of 6 children, according to UNESCO.

**INFANT MORTALITY:** The better educated the

women, the less likely their babies are to die. "Primary education alone helps reduce infant mortality significantly, and secondary education helps even more," according to "What Works." "Girls who stay in school also marry later, when they are better able to bear and care for children."

**MATERNAL MORTALITY:** Greater knowledge of health care and fewer pregnancies significantly reduces the risk of maternal mortality, according to the World Bank.

**REDUCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Educated girls and women are more likely to stand up for themselves, resist violence. "In poor areas where women are isolated within their communities, have little education and cannot earn much, girls are often regarded as an economic burden and women and girls sometimes suffer deliberate neglect or outright harm," according to "What Works."

**HEALTHIER CHILDREN:** Educated women "learn what their children need to stay healthy and how to secure necessary support for their

children." Including health care, better nutrition and sanitation, according to "What Works." They also channel more of their resources to the health of their children than men.

### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

**EDUCATED CHILDREN:** Educated women more likely to insist on education for their own children, especially their daughters. Their children study as much as two hours more each day than children of illiterate mothers and stay in school longer, according to "What Works."

**LOCAL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT:** Educated women are more likely to participate in political discussions, meetings and decision making.

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS:** Studies show that education promotes more representative, effective government. As women are educated and approach parity with men, research shows "governments and other institutions function better and with less corruption," according to "What Works."



## History of Dreidel

### Ancient Games

**J**ust as children do today, the children of the ancient Israelites enjoyed playing games.

One popular game played during the Jewish celebration of Chanukah is dreidel. The dreidel is a top. In Yiddish, its name means *turn*.

### Time to Play

#### Vary the Game

Hebrew letters also stand for numbers.

Nun = 50

Gimmel = 3

Hey = 5

Shin = 300

Have the students take turns in their groups spinning the dreidel. After each spin, have someone record each player's score. The first person who scores 1,000 wins.

# The History of Falafel

Station 3- Answer  
questions.

If you haven't had privilege of eating them, falafels are a fried ball or patty of spiced chickpeas (also known as garbanzo beans) combined with spices and possibly some form of wheat. In some areas, some or all of the chickpeas are replaced with fava beans. Lebanese falafel often uses a combination of fava beans and chickpeas, while in Egypt, it is traditional to use just fava beans. Shape also varies by region. Falafel is commonly served in pocket or roll of flat bread with some sort of fresh vegetable or salad and a yogurt, tahini (sesame seed), or hot sauce. In Israel, they often include french fries in the sandwich as well. They can also be served plain with some combination of sauces, hummus or babaghanoush for dipping, either as a snack or as part of a meza plate. Occasionally falafel are served with tomato sauce, much like meatballs.

People have been growing chickpeas for over 20,000 years, making them one of the early staples of the human diet and first agricultural plants. While the history of falafel is probably not that ancient, it has been around long enough that its origin is shrouded in history – and somewhat controversial! Israel claims falafel as its national food, and in fact, falafel was one of the words we learned in the first week of my beginning Hebrew class.

Palestinians complain that falafel was stolen from them, while Israelis point out that the ingredients, if not the recipe, are documented in the bible as foods of the Hebrews. Additionally, they point to the fact that falafel quality and popularity in Israel improved with the influx of Arab Jews from throughout the middle east. What is clear is that falafel is a food that uses foods common in the middle east and is popular throughout the region.

Traditional falafel is made with ground dried soaked chickpeas. Dried legumes, like chickpeas, store and travel very well; particularly in dry climates. Since the chickpeas are not precooked, falafel can be made with

as little as 5 minutes of actual cooking (frying) time, in comparison, most other legume dishes require over an hour of actual cooking. This makes falafel probably the fastest cooking legume dish. Easy storage and low fuel requirements makes falafel an ideal protein source when time or resources are limited – such as when traveling.

Falafel is sometimes called the "Hot Dog of the Middle East", but the comparison has more to do with their shared roll as ubiquitous street food than taste or quality. Unlike hot dogs, falafel are very nutritious and include both high-quality protein and vegetables. If you want to get a taste of life in a falafel stand, check out the fun Falafel King game below. Be careful, like falafel, it can be addictive!

References:

*The Pea & Lentil Cookbook*. (Moscow, ID: USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council, 2000.)

"falafel (thing)." *Everything 2*. 21 February 2003. Everything2.com. 23 September 2006 <[https://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node\\_id=1432738](https://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1432738)>.

Just for fun:

[Falafel King game](#) - try your hand at running a falafel stand.

**Middle Eastern Culture Forum Posts**