

New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

The mother of education

New Internationalist Easier English
Ready Intermediate Lesson



What's on the menu today?:

- Speaking - discussion**
- Reading**
- Vocabulary**
- Language of requests**
- Speaking – role play**
- Writing – a letter**

Why do children go to school? - discuss and order these in small groups

- a) to get a job**
- b) to learn a lot of history, geography, science etc.**
- c) to learn how to think**
- d) to pass exams**
- e) to ask questions**
- f) to make friends and enjoy themselves**
- g) to learn to solve problems**
- h) to give their parents time to work**
- i) to learn about and fight for their rights**
- j) to learn to work with other people**

Reading 1:

Sakena Yacoobi:



a) What's her job?

b) What's her nationality?

Now find the answers on next slide in 1 minute

‘When I first started working in an Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan, I wanted to help change the Afghan people with education. I wanted them to be able to think, ask questions and solve their own problems. Now, more than 20 years later, I still want the same thing’ says Sakena Yacoobi. Yacoobi is small, but she is passionate about school and learning. She believes that community-based education can change societies, and that educating women is the best way to make sure we have peace and development.

‘Education has changed Afghanistan. It is completely different from 20 years ago. Women have developed critical thinking, they are asking questions, they run for Parliament. They stand up for their rights – on land, property, marriage, domestic violence, education, citizenship,’ she says.

Yacoobi was born in Herat, Afghanistan. When she was young, she saw the effects of poverty in her country: ‘There were no schools; no hospitals. People had no way to make their lives better. I wanted to change that.’ She studied for a Master’s in Public Health in the US. Then she moved to Pakistan and started her first school in an Afghan refugee camp in 1991. ‘Women had lost everything. They suffered in the war, they didn’t trust us. So we needed to start from the beginning. We asked what they needed. We built a learning centre. And we asked the community to help.’ The main point is that education should support what people want to do for themselves.

Now read the same text again and answer these questions:

1/ Which countries has Sakena spent time in – and what did she do there?

2/ Why does she think children go to school?

3/ How does Sakena think Afghanistan has changed in the last 20 years?

Match:

1/ refugee

2/ poverty

3/ community

4/ domestic violence

5/ property

6/ secret

7/ orphanage

8/ funding

a) a husband or wife hitting the other at home

b) something you don't want anyone to know

c) a home for several children who have no parents

d) someone who has to leave their country because of war or politics etc.

e) money for a project

f) having very little money

g) something that someone owns eg. a house

h) a group of people that live in the same area or who have the same interest

Reading 2:

Before you read, discuss:

1/ What are some of the

problems in Afghanistan? Why?

2/ How many schools do you think Sakeena has started? How many children do you think these schools have helped?

3/ How do you think this type of education can grow and develop?

Now read the second part to find the answers



In the first two years of the first school, she worked with 15,000 children. Communities in Afghanistan started to ask for her help and she moved back to her own country. She created the Afghanistan Institute of Learning (AIL) in 1995, to offer education, health and training to women and children. Under the Taliban, AIL ran 80 secret home-schools, and educated about 3,000 girls.

Her organization now runs 44 learning centres for women and children in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also runs four clinics, a hospital, an orphanage, a programme for street children and a radio station to take education outside the cities. AIL has helped more than 11 million Afghans and Yacoobi has won many awards for her work.

She wants her community-based education to grow all over Afghanistan, and to other countries. To do this, she wants to open a university to train teachers and develop the teaching plan. She also wants to start a TV station for women's rights and education.

But there are many problems. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. Millions of children – especially girls – are still not going to school, and there is not enough security. Yacoobi is worried that other countries are not so interested in Afghanistan now and don't want to help. So there won't be enough money to improve schools and pay for materials and teachers.

'Yes, Afghanistan has problems, but this is normal after 40 years of war and conflict. We need to work together. It's an problem for all of us, not just Afghanistan. Give us a chance. We need help; we need more funding and training.'

But Yacoobi is optimistic. 'There will be more problems, but we are not sitting in a corner saying we cannot do anything about it. We continue to work hard. We are making a difference. We are changing our lives through education and we want the world to know that.'

Useful language for asking for money

– discuss and put in order of politeness

a) Could you please give ...

b) We would really appreciate it if you would donate ...

c) Can I have ...

d) Give me ...

e) We would be really happy with ...

f) Would you be able to donate ...

Prepare for a role play

A

Sakena Yacoobi

- Ask the charity for money
- Explain what you will use the money for
- Describe your work so far and your plans for the future
- Persuade the charity to give as much money as possible

B

A manager from a big charity

- Find out what Sakena wants and why
- Ask about Sakena's work so far and plans for the future
- If you are sure the money will be used well, offer some money

Now, in pairs do A – B role plays – see how much money Sakena can get:



Homework

a) Read the original, more difficult article – you will understand it now because you read the Easy English article:

<https://newint.org/columns/makingwaves/2016/09/01/sakena-yacoobi/>

b) Write a letter from Sakena to a charity to ask for money for her project.

