

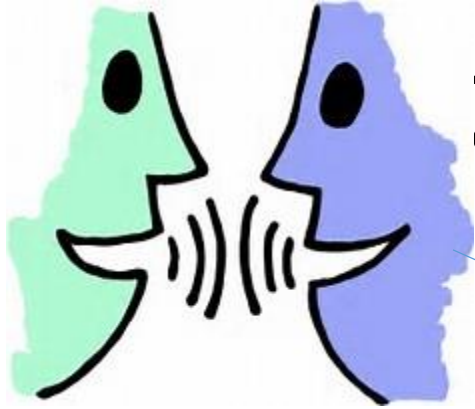


New Internationalist
The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

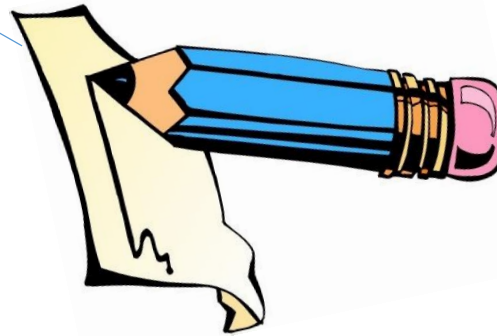
Jamila Afghani

New Internationalist Ready Lesson
Intermediate

This lesson:




questions



- a) **campaigner**
- b) **imam**
- c) **a threat**
- d) **literacy**
- e) **to ban**
- f) **domestic**
- g) **to escape**
- h) **sewing**
- i) **tailoring**
- j) **embarrassed**



Match definitions to the words:

- 1) a warning
- 2) to stop an action
- 3) In the home
- 4) making clothes
- 5) confused or uncomfortable
- 6) someone who works hard to make changes
- 7) to run away from
- 8) 
- 9) reading and writing
- 10) Muslim leader

What do you think? True or false? Discuss with a neighbour. Then read and check:



- 1) Jamila Afghani works for women's rights.**
- 2) She is from Afghanistan.**
- 3) Her work is dangerous.**
- 4) She helps a small group of women to read and write.**

Beena Nadeem talks to Jamila Afghani, who is an Afghan campaigner for women's education and rights.

‘Every day, me and my family get death threats. It’s been worse in the past five years,’ says Jamila Afghani and she smiles. ‘I am afraid I will not live to finish my work.’

For many years, Jamila Afghani fought for women’s rights in one of the most difficult countries in the world: Afghanistan. She’s brought changes in women’s literacy. Literacy is the answer, she says, to real education.

Since 2001 she has started a group of schools under her foundation, Noor, which means ‘light’. 60,000 women have learned to read and write along with other skills.

Put the words in the questions in the right order. Then read to find the answers:



- 1) control did the women imams the ?**
- 2) imams with did many how work she ?**
- 3) centres against imams the Jamila's are ?**
- 4) Taliban girls to school let go the did ?**
- 5) lives now are better women's ?**

She started by talking to the imams who were continuing with the ideas of controlling women. She now works with a group of more than 6,000 imams in 22 provinces. They all tell the men it's a good idea to bring their wives and daughters to the centres.

Educating women in Afghanistan is full of difficulties. With the Taliban, they beat women for leaving the house and they banned girls from schools. But 16 years after the fall of the Taliban, the old ideas are still very strong.

'Women in Afghanistan face domestic violence every day,' she says. 'They are not allowed to do any social activities and so they are prisoners. After the past 40 years, as this country passed through wars, those problems are worse.'

Here are some interview questions for Jamila. Read the text and write her answers:



- 1) Have you always lived in Afghanistan?.**
- 2) Do you know Arabic?**
- 3) Did anything surprise you when you read the Qur'an?**
- 4) Where did you start your first women's centre?**
- 5) Who helped you most to start the centres?**
- 6) How many centres are there now?**
- 7) What is the most difficult part of your work?**

Back in Afghanistan, she started a centre in Ghazni. ‘Even my own cousins, neighbours, and the imam, who all knew me, were against me and my work. I was working for change and I had to fight,’ she says. ‘I decided to talk to the imam rather than talking to each person individually.’

She invited the imam to the centre, though he was too embarrassed to meet a woman. ‘I told him, “If you can find one verse from the Qur’an that says education is bad, then I’ll stop now and give you the key of this centre”.’

He was surprised by how much Afghani knew about Islam. He began to ask men to let their wives and daughters come to the centre.

The imam said good things about us. My cousins were no longer against me and they sent their daughters to my centre. Today we have 36 women's centres in Ghazni,' she says. And 20 per cent of mosques in Kabul now have a prayer room for women.

With the help of other female Muslims, Afghani started what she calls 'gender sensitivity training' for imams.

But her work is still dangerous. Recently, two of the imams who helped her were murdered. But she continues. 'When you educate a woman, you educate their family. They share what they learn. That's the way to an enlightened society.'

Introducing Jamila Afghani to your class.



Jamila Afghani has come to talk to your class. Write your introduction to her. Then practise saying it to other students:

“Hello everyone. We are very happy to have Jamila Afghani to talk to us. She...”

Homework

Now read the original text:



<https://newint.org/columns/makingwaves/2017/10/01/jamila-afghani>

and find words with these meanings:

- a) a group of schools (paragraph 3)
- b) female control (paragraph 4)
- c) difficulties (paragraph 5)
- d) persuade (paragraph 9)
- e) very surprised (paragraph 11)
- f) helped (paragraph 15)