

Welcome to this week's presentation & conversation hosted by the **Canadian Association for the Club of Rome**, a Club dedicated to intelligent debate & action on global issues.

The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker & do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of CACOR.

Girls Education In Afghanistan Today.

Our speaker today is Marilyn Mosley Gordonier, an American educator, speaker, & author. She is an advocate for girl's education worldwide. She founded or co-founded Educate Girls Now, [Laurel Springs School](#) (now the largest provider of personalized online education in USA), Mother of Divine Grace (a Catholic distance ed school serving > 6,000 students/y), Eikoh Web Internet High School (1st distance-learning program in Tokyo), & Laurel Springs/C2 Korea (1st online learning program in South Korea). She has received many awards for her work, sits on several boards (Educate Girls Now, the Global 500 Environmental Forum), was Education Chair for the Captain Planet Foundation, & Co-President of USA CoR, & member of CoR.

DESCRIPTION: Since the Taliban gained complete power in Afghanistan in August, 2021, girls have been banned from all schools and are restricted to their homes. Educate Girls Now has steadfastly come to their aid, providing online classes, a journaling project, English classes, the opportunity to attend the Asian University for Women, & food, shelter, & hope. Marilyn will discuss the multiple ways girls are being educated, who are determined to learn as their lives change dramatically under the Taliban regime.

The presentation will be followed by a conversation, questions, & observations from the participants.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, & Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



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2023 Oct 11 Zoom #166



Education For Afghan Girls
Reinventing Distance Learning

Identify Key Levers for Change that will Ensure Wellbeing

Educate Girls Now, August 2021

- Educate Girls Now is a nonprofit founded in 2013 as a response to the dire needs of Afghanistan girls, demonstrated in the documentary film *Girl Rising*, which tells the stories of nine extraordinary girls from developing countries.
- We have provided an education to **314 girls** in Kabul, Kunduz, Herat and Mazar.
- We have rescued 16 war widows and families from a life of extreme deprivation.
- **None** of our students have dropped out, or been forced into marriage.
- The team has successfully negotiated with families to stop marriage proposals to girls participating in the program ..
- Our dedicated staff ensures that the girls complete the school year.
- **Nine of our girls** have gone on to universities in Afghanistan!



Preventing Child Marriage

- Since our inception no child has been sold into child marriage.
- Violence against women and girls arises due to entrenched gender inequalities, including women's lack of access to economic, political, and social resources.
- Afghan women and girls are often forced into marriages with older men.
- The country ranks among the least favorable on the Gender Inequality Index.



Literacy - 2021 Pre-Taliban

- Afghanistan **has** one of the lowest literacy rates in the world at 43 percent while the international average **is** 84 percent.
- 3.7 million Afghanistan children **were** out-of-school. 60% **are** girls..
- Only 37 percent of adolescent **girls** are literate, compared to 66 percent of adolescent boys (United Nations Girls Initiative).
- 33% of girls are married before age 18, forcing them to drop out of school.



Education for Girls, 2023

- In September of 2021, Afghanistan became the first country to forbid girls in 7th - 12th grades from attending public or private schools.
- Since December of 2021, girls are forbidden from attending all universities.
- After the winter vacation of December 2023, with promises of opening schools to girls, the Taliban again refused to allow girls to return to school or afternoon centers.
- This has taken a terrible toll on their mental health.



7

Life Today, 2023

- The abrupt cutoff of civilian and security aid ([more than \\$8 billion per year](#), equivalent to 40% of Afghanistan's GDP, took place immediately after the Taliban takeover.
- The economy has shrunk by 20% to 30% since August 2021, a great many people have lost jobs and livelihoods, social services have been decimated. Poverty and hunger as well as the humanitarian crisis have greatly worsen.
- Taliban restrictions on girls education will have disastrous long term economic consequences.

“Gradually the rumors of the Taliban increased, they had reached the gates of Kabul. We had neither seen the Taliban or seen their first government, in the 90’s, because many of my classmates, including me were born after the first rule of the Taliban. Our information about the Taliban, was based on hearsay, and information we heard and read in the media. We hoped our lives would not be changed forever, especially for girls.” Mariam, student, University of Kabul



Education - Now

EGN is the only online school providing classes for Afghan girls in grades K - 12~~th~~ grades, with teachers located in Afghanistan and United States. Our goal Continued education - ensuring we do not lose a generation of girls.

We offer daily online education for Afghan girls including

- English
- Journaling
- 7th-10th grade full curriculum
- Preparation to return to school or
- Preparation for acceptance to a US-school



Asian University for Women

- EGN provides eligible high school girls ~~with~~ the opportunity to attend the Asian University for Women.
- Our educational team counsels families on the benefits of sending their girls to college abroad.
- We prepare girls with English classes, laptops, phone, assistance completing their application and emotional support.
- We help with visas, passports and arranging a male family member to accompany our girls to Bangladesh.



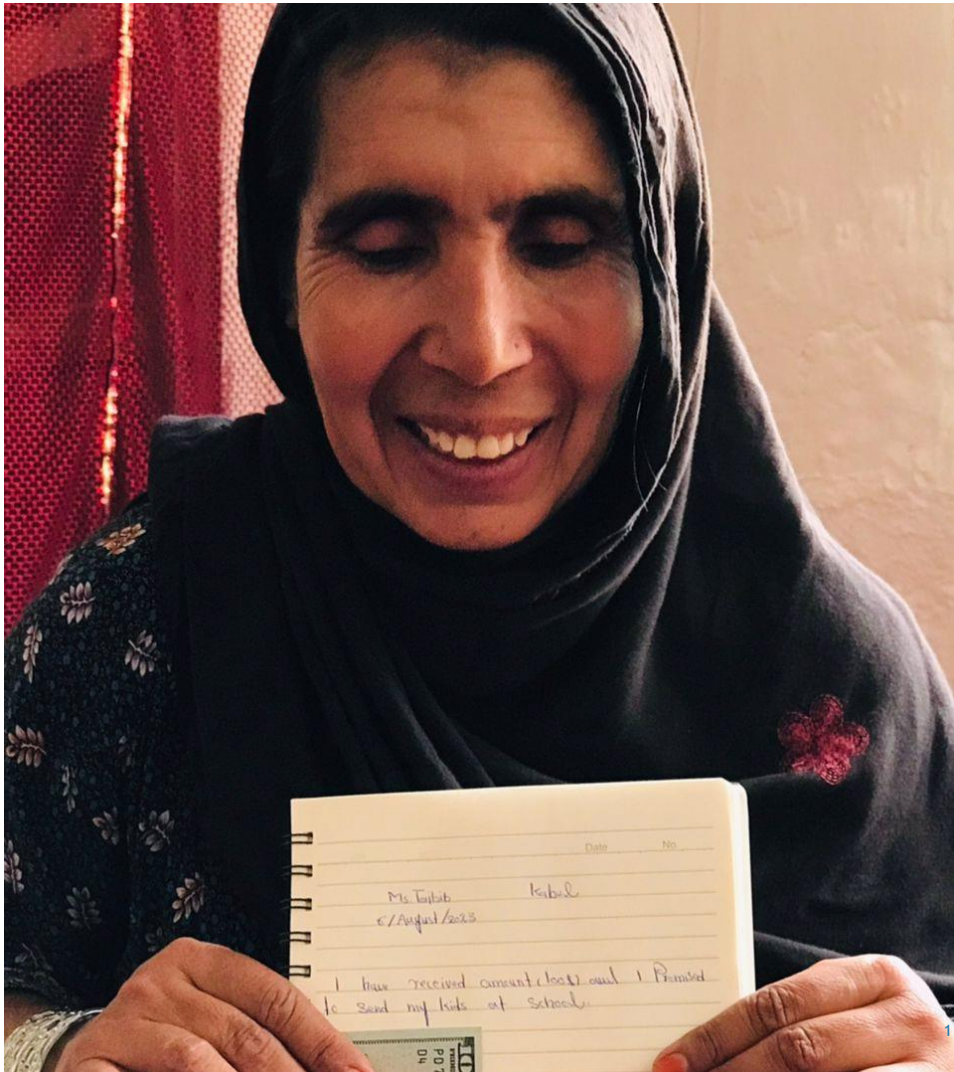
Key Levers - Collaboration

- We collaborate with the Afghan Girls Financial Aid Fund which sponsors Afghan girls and places them in US university.
- We partner with AESOP Afghanistan and the ESL department at the University of Wisconsin to provide English classes online.
- In collaboration with Der Spiegel, we have created a journaling project for Afghan girls. Model after the German poetry project; our program helps Afghan girls find their voice.
- We joined with Stanford University and many other universities and educators providing online support to girls.



Key Lever - Online Education

- Before August 2021, online education was non-existent due to cultural restrictions, lack of phones, cellular data and electricity.
- With schools closed, girls are learning on cell phones, using what's app and google meet.
- All of our classes are presented on cell phones.
- Students in restricted areas continue to work in workbooks and texts.



Lever - Empowering Mothers and Girls

- Our mothers are in control of their own livelihood and are able to provide ~~for~~ their family **with** meals, clothing and educational needs
- Women are more likely to insist on education for their own children, having experienced the challenges of poverty, multiple children and lack of literacy.
- Mothers ensure their girls are receiving academic and vocational training.



Lever - Mothers and Fathers of the Future

- Education is the key to peace in the region.
- Educating girls ensures that when they become mothers they will continue the tradition of home learning.
- Girls are determined, and dedicated to receiving an education. Opportunity is their greatest ally.
- **Girls' fate** are directly connected to educating boys and supporting them to be caring husbands and fathers.



Their Future

- Investing in girls' education is how we invest in the future of women.
- Girls who are educated are more likely to find jobs as adults, get married older, have fewer children, and earn more for their families and communities.
- The only way to ensure women's rights in Afghanistan and to truly empower them is by offering girls an online primary, secondary, and higher education.

Our goal is to nurture the human spirit.
How do we scale up to educate Afghan girls?
By working together as a team.
There is a growing circle of dedicated individuals and institutions making
education of girls in Afghanistan a reality.
Will you join us?



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