

The Maria-Helena Foundation

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**The International Relations Students' Association and the Arab Students' Association
Presents**

Promoting Female Literacy in Muslim Societies: the case of Pakistan

Ana Komnenic and Dr. Muhammad Iqbal

Date : February 28, 2011 (Monday)
Time : 7 pm to 9 pm (registration / networking starts at 6:30 pm)
Location : 1866 Main Mall, Buchanan Building Block A, Room 202,
the University of British Columbia

Female literacy is very important as it is known that low female literacy rates are associated with: a) high fertility rates (population explosion), b) high rates of child mortality, c) high rates of maternal mortality, and d) high rates of violence against women.

A survey of literacy levels and the differences between male and female literacy levels was done in several major Muslim majority countries. Data were collected and compared for three main regions: South Asia, West Africa, and the Balkans. Low levels of female literacy in these Muslim majority countries will be compared to other countries in the region. Data from the Gender Gap Index will also be examined in an effort to explore gender inequality beyond literacy and education.

In South Asia, Pakistan - a very conservative patriarchal society - has the lowest female literacy rate, and its consequences have been far reaching. Internal violence, a global downturn in the economy, and a population explosion has combined to produce extreme poverty in the country. In addition to traditional low female school enrollments, the parents are now tempted to pull their daughters out of school to reduce household expenses.

In this presentation we will also discuss some innovative methods adopted by countries such as Bangladesh and Morocco to improve female literacy in these countries. The activities of the Maria-Helena Foundation to promote literacy, particularly female literacy in Pakistan, will be described.

Kindly pass this invitation on to others within your circle of friends and family who might be interested to attend this event.

For further information contact:

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (604 228 9885)
(Professor Emeritus, The University of British Columbia)
Founder and President