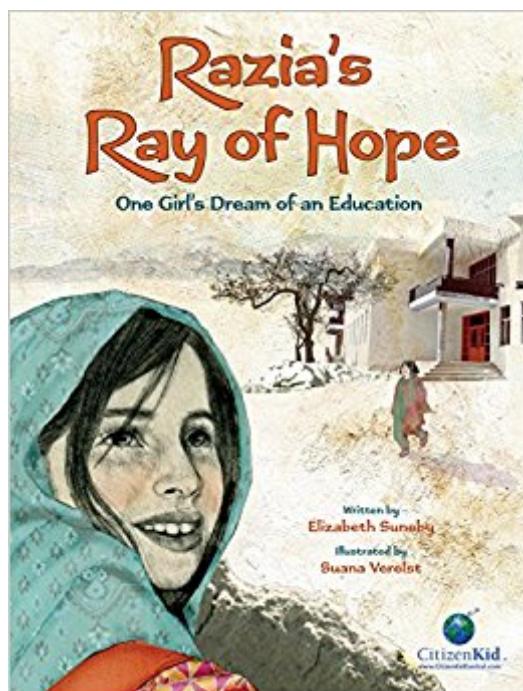


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# Razia's Ray Of Hope: One Girl's Dream Of An Education (CitizenKid)



## Synopsis

Razia dreams of getting an education, but in her small village in Afghanistan, girls haven't been allowed to attend school for many years. When a new girls' school opens in the village, a determined Razia must convince her father and oldest brother that educating her would be best for her, their family and their community. Razia's Ray of Hope is the latest inspiring story from the CitizenKid collection. It is based on the true stories of the students of the Zabuli Education Center for Girls just outside of Kabul, founded by a generous and resourceful woman named Razia Jan, a CNN hero, who also appears in the story.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 3-5  This story was inspired by Razia Jan, an Afghani woman who lived in the U.S. but returned to Kabul to build the first girls' school there. A fictional youngster named Razia longs to go to the newly opened school for girls but must have permission from her father and oldest brother. Both the prose and the plot are predictable  her relatives refuse:  "Next you'll want Razia to go into town to shop by herself,"  says her father to the child's supportive grandfather.  "Or for women to shed their burqas in public,"  her brother adds. In the end, the real Razia Jan appears to convince the men, and the child is permitted to go to school. In contrast, there is nothing ordinary about the mixed-media illustrations. Each spread is a combination of muted colors, block-print designs, and evocative collage portraits of elders, active children, and the blue backs of burqa-clad women, interspersed with photographs of everyday objects: a teapot, a

wool blanket, colored pencils in the school. Back matter includes a glossary of Dari words, and suggested classroom activities and discussion. Also included is a short biography of Razia Jan and a photo of her with three grinning schoolgirls. The photo brings the fictional story to life, illuminating that part of the world in which girls beg to go to school, then bring their workbooks home to teach their mothers. ©Toby Rajput, National Louis University, Skokie, IL (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Inspired by the true story of Razia Jan, an Afghani American woman who has devoted her life to advancing the education of Afghani girls, this follows a fictionalized Razia as she begs the men in her family to be allowed to attend the new school for girls being built in her village. Even a supportive grandfather cannot sway the steadfast refusal of the patriarchy, so it is only by chance that her dream comes true. Razia's yearning for school is described in rich, context-specific language: "They painted the door red, as bright as the flames of the tandoor." Verelst's mixed-media illustrations feel fresh and modern while remaining true to the rural environment, combining crisp, detailed pencil renderings with digital reproductions of traditional Afghani fabrics and photographs, situating Razia's story firmly in the sun-bleached, rocky terrain of rural Afghanistan. The back matter includes a list of classroom-friendly activities that should help teachers encourage readers to appreciate the literary, artistic, and historical elements of this book. Grades 3-5. --Amina Chaudhri

Very inspiration book about an amazing woman. She shows how one person can make a difference, even when going against a culture that opposes her idea of educating girls. I look forward to reading it with my nephews.

Was going to give as a gift But it was a sad story. Donated to the local library.

Note: This review was first published on UK as a review of a book supplied to review without cost by the UK Vine Voices scheme. This is a very attractive and informative book for elementary/ Grade 7/8 schoolchildren that brings into focus the lives of children denied an education by virtue of their gender. I have categorised this with adult books, and I ordered this thinking I was going to read a biography of Razia. This is a children's book, however. What this is, is a beautifully illustrated children's story that tells how, as a child, educationalist Razia Jan was initially denied an education

by her father and brother. It tells of how she overcame their objections with the help of her grandfather and the female teacher of the new girls' school opening in her neighbourhood. Swatches of vividly patterned, coloured and textured clothing incorporated in to the illustrations make this a visually interesting book. There is plenty here for children to think about and discuss, a vocabulary which introduces new words from the Pashto/Dari cultures, and helpful teaching notes to enable teachers and home educators to get the most out of the book. At the end of the book is a short biography of the 'real Razia Jan', a wholly inspirational and remarkable woman. A useful cross-cultural classroom resource, a thought-provoking and inspiring story.

Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education by Elizabeth Suneby, illustrated by Suana VerelstCitizen Kid (Kids Can Press), 2013 Multicultural Literature/Realistic Fiction 32

pages Recommended for grades 3-5 A story of a young Afghanistan girl desperately wanting the chance at an education of her own. This isn't the first story I've read this year about a child's dream of an education, but this one is nice for younger readers, while retaining the option of stretching upwards into older grade levels. The illustrations are lovely, part photograph collage and part drawing. Included in this text are some excellent teaching resources and activities.

Razia's Ray of Hope is a fictionalized account of the building of the Zabuli Education Center, a school for girls, in the Afghan village of Deh'Subz. Told through the eyes of a young girl who dreams of an education for herself, it is a slice of life story beginning with the laying of the first stones of the school and ending with Razia's enrollment. Although Razia has the support of her baba gi (grandfather), her father and brothers refuse at first to give her permission to attend the new school. Limited by their own upbringing, their concern about losing Razia's contribution to the family's income and their fear for her safety, they initially say "no" after a family council meeting. It isn't until a visit from Razia Jan (the founder of the school) and an assurance of safety that they begin to understand that allowing Razia (the young protagonist shares the name of the real life founder) to attend is good for the family, the village and the country. Razia Jan says, "I ask for your tolerance, if not support...If men are the backbone of Afghanistan, then women are the eyes...without an education, we will all be blind." This story is beautifully and honestly written. As part of the Kids Can Press "Citizen Kid" series ("a collection of books that inform children about the world and inspire them to be better global citizens"), it serves as a powerful introduction to the lives of women and children in Afghanistan and the power of education to change those lives. It is an accessible story for children young and old. Enhanced by multi-media illustrations that capture both the beauty and

harsh realities of the small village, this book truly does provide a ray of hope.

Based on a true story of the girls at the Zabuli Education Center for Girls in Afghanistan, this is one girl's story of a dream come true. Razia would sit by her brother every night as they did their homework by candlelight, hoping to learn alongside them. Then she finds out that a school for girls is being built in her village- but would she convince the men in her life to allow her to go? Not only is the story well-written, but I loved the beautiful illustrations in the book as well. This was a favorite in our house

Razia's Ray of Hope is a beautifully written and inspirational cultural story that highlights struggles girls encounter in Afghanistan even today. Through her book, author Liz Suneby takes us into an unfamiliar world and shares a story of how education can make a difference. The powerful and vivid illustrations bring the moving story to life. Written for children, Razia's Ray of Hope is just as compelling for adults. Razia Jan, the woman who founded the school for girls in rural Afghanistan, about which author Liz Suneby writes, is a force of nature. Razia Jan was named one of CNN's Heroes in 2012 for the incredible work she is doing to change the lives of girls in Afghanistan. Razia Jan was quoted as saying, "these girls need to get educated. Knowledge is something that nobody can steal from them". By buying and reading Razia's Ray of Hope, you too are supporting Razia Jan's important mission. Author Liz Suneby is very skilled at writing stories that empower young women. She is also the author of the award winning, See What You Can Be, showcasing over 50 career possibilities for young girls.

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