

# Building a College in Rural India

*An Interview with*

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**You are an alumnus of Boston University. What is the most important thing you learned when you were in graduate school here? Who were the professors or courses that made the major impact on the way you think as an economist?**

The most important thing I learned as a graduate student in the Department of Economics from 1971 to 1976 was to analyze problems and questions from different perspectives but always with a context and in a logical way. I was most fortunate to have professors with different international backgrounds. I worked closely with and learned a lot from: Professor Karol Holbik, an expert in monetary economics and central banking from Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia via Detroit, Michigan and Madison, Wisconsin; Professor Kathleen Langley, an expert in development economics and growth models from Britain via Baghdad, Iraq; Professor Mark Karp, an expert in development economics and northeastern African countries of Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan, from Poland via Trieste, Italy and Rabat, Morocco; and Professor John Hughes, an expert in microeconomic theory via Brown University. Their influence was clear in my decision to focus on financial and development economics.

**As a teacher, what is the most important thing you aim to convey to your students?**

As a teacher I wish to teach my students how to think about financial and economic problems and application of economic ideas to problem solving. Hopefully, it facilitates innovative and creative thinking in whatever they decide to do as professionals with the highest integrity and ethical standards in the conduct of their personal and business affairs.

**Can you tell us about your project of developing a college in rural India? Where did the inspiration come from, and how are you going to implement it?**

As a Baby Boomer in India I was inspired most by Mahatma Gandhi who brought freedom to more people in this world than anyone else in history. He did so by learning from Indian history, great American minds like Henry David Thoreau, British thought, legal system and history, and used them most effectively to bring about freedom to India and many other peoples around the world that followed India's success in getting independence from the colonial powers. Other

people who have inspired me are my grandmother, Parvati, who was most respected and generous lady in our village; my mother, Ratni, who worked tirelessly for the family, and my wife, Helena, who insisted on complaining to the head of WHO in Delhi about open sewers and heaps of garbage in her first morning in India and warning him of a potential plague that the WHO and India should do something about. All these four people cared deeply about others. This is also one of the high American values - some 90% and more Americans participate in community service and sharing their fortunes with others.

The Mrs. Helena Kaushik Women's PG College is one more example of converting that inspiration of giving into a most useful action to help others stand on their own feet. There is no more important resource in the world than human capital and a college is the highest level where one creates and disseminates the capital of human knowledge, such as at Boston University. The College started in 1999 and has completed seven academic years, helping 230 young women receive Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees so far. Degree programs and courses are added each year on a 30-acre new campus of more than 80,000 square-feet of modern space. For example, a Master of Science in Biotechnology will be offered in 2006.

**If people who read this newsletter want to help with this project, what should they do?**

I do hope people become interested in this project. People can find current information about the College on the website [www.helenakaushik.org](http://www.helenakaushik.org). Of course, they are welcome to contact me at [skaushik@pace.edu](mailto:skaushik@pace.edu) and (914) 422-4350, (914) 762-6168, (914) 924-5236. They can also reach the College at Mrs. Helena Kaushik Women's College, Malsisar, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India 331 028. Phone: 91 01595 276593, 276818, 276561. E-mail: [helenakaushikpgcollege@yahoo.com](mailto:helenakaushikpgcollege@yahoo.com)

Any help in providing higher education to women in rural India, where only a fraction of 1% of women have received college education, would be most appreciated. I look forward to working with the Department of Economics, other parts of Boston University, and its alumnae/i, on the one hand and Mrs. Helena Kaushik Women's PG College on the other.