Annual Report
2018
Dear Friends,

I am grateful to all our supporters and my dedicated staff who made 2018 a good year for AIL. 486,074 Afghans benefitted from our education, health and training programs. Highlights include the year-long Women’s Empowerment Group which resulted in most of the women standing for elected office. AIL held many workshops in the year including 10 on training teachers; some were held in areas of the country inaccessible to us in previous years.

We held two successful conferences for hundreds of people on good governance and love and forgiveness. The Health and Learning Center programs continued to reach tens of thousands and expanded their reach during the year with new sites.

2019 will be another busy year for all of AIL. We are proud of the work we do and see hope in the people we work with as they improve their lives through education and better health.

Dr. Sakena Yacoobi
Founder
Afghan Institute of Learning
CONTENTS

Awards and Speaking Engagements
Education
Health care and Education
Training
Legal Aid Clinic for Women
Support for Radio Meraj
Support for Private Schools
Emergency Aid
Projects in Development
Financial Statement
Final Note
AWARDS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Dr. Yacoobi was honored to be recognized in 2018 with the 2018 AMI Humanitarian Award from Al-Mahdi Institute, Birmingham, UK, in honor of her outstanding contribution in establishing the Afghan Institute of Learning and facilitating the training of women and children in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In October 2018 she received the TRT World Citizen Educator Award 2018 in Istanbul, Turkey, for her outstanding work in education.

Dr. Yacoobi works in Afghanistan as CEO of AIL but she also travels the world to speak at conferences and other events. In 2018, she attended major events in six countries on four continents. She is a valued leader and speaker in the fields of education, health, leadership, human rights, women’s empowerment, cultural revival, innovation, community involvement and refugees.
EDUCATION

AIL’s Learning Center Program continues to provide quality education to women, children and men. In 2018, the 46 LCs in Afghanistan provided classes to 28,176 students (19,124 female, 67.8%). Three new centers were opened in the Herat area Saadat Abad, Yacoobi Foundation #3, Kohsan and Robat e khorazan. The classes cover a wide range of subjects from academic and preschool to income generating skills. In Herat, the most popular classes are literacy, tailoring, Arabic, English and math. Computer classes continue to be a growth area with a lot of interest from both male and female students. Total literacy students at all levels in Herat was 3,971 during the year including mobile literacy.
All students at centers also receive lessons in accounting, business management, health, human rights, democracy, leadership and core values such as respect, responsibility, trust and peace. The women who take tailoring can then go onto start small businesses for themselves. The centers act as women’s networking places creating a safe, social environment where friendships are formed and group problem-solving takes place. Even the youngest students learn about core values such as peace and respect from an early age.

Nadia is a Computer class student at a center in Herat. She said, “I have been in computer class for 5 months and I learned lots of new things and I am now a fully skilled computer programmer. Computer skills are extremely important and everyone needs to have them. I am so proud of myself that I learned this skill and can work for my countrymen. Recently, I got a part-time job at a foundation for women. There, I exchange emails and coordinate meetings for the board of directors. By earning money from my new job, I can buy whatever I need to have. I am also able to teach computer skills to my children, and don’t need to pay anyone else to do it. I really do love computers. I have also learned to communicate with my friends and promote my skills. Whenever a person can earn money she can live independently and support a family.”
Tailoring is a popular class at all LCs where it is offered. Women want to learn how to make clothes for their families but they also want business, communication and accounting skills to become entrepreneurs and start their own businesses. In 2018, Herat had 1,147 sewing students. When they finish the class, they will have the necessary sewing and business skills to start a business.

Amena comes from a very poor family. She said, "I have lived in a very hard situation my whole life. My father is the only one who earns money for our family and only enough for food. I have no older brothers to help my father, and I have four sisters. I felt hopeless before joining the free tailoring class at the AIL center.

After only a few classes, I learned lots of sewing skills and started to sew clothes for my sisters. Now I am able to sew every type of clothing. I have my own tailoring business and earn money. I am very happy that I can help my father with the expenses of our daily life. I have proved that there isn’t any difference between boys and girls if the way is paved for them to improve themselves. Thanks to AIL, they changed my dark life and the lives of thousands of people like me."
The Mobile Literacy Classes for women and older girls continues to be very popular and all students have quickly become literate. 2018 saw an increase in the percentage of students who achieved a 4th grade reading level by the end of the 4 month course. This class teaches literacy through the use of mobile phones and texting interaction between teachers and students. AIL developed its own guide and curriculum for the course, including over 2,000 messages on a wide variety of subjects. The students learn life skills and educational messages through the texting subject matter. The phones also provide a means for social activity which helps reduce isolation.

There were 11 mobile literacy classes in 2018 for 385 female students. 151 students started the course with no understanding of letters and 119 were reading at first grade level with the other 115 somewhere in between. At the end of the courses, 353 students (91.6%) were reading at 4th grade level and 32 at 3rd grade level. Since 2013, there have been 2,291 students with 1,673 of them reaching the 4th grade in 4 months and 333 reaching 3rd grade level.

One student said, "I am learning reading and writing in the Mobile Literacy Class. Before coming in this class, I could not read or write. I have two children and they are both in school. When they had problems with their homework, they would come to me for help, but I could not help them and this was painful for me. This prompted me to join this class. After 3 months I was able to help my children as I could now read and write. Our teacher taught us how to use a mobile phone and how to write messages, how to send a message to another individual and other aspects of phone use. I would love to participate in other AIL courses and classes, moreover I would like to join a school."
Cultural Revival
AIL is also helping Afghans recover their cultural identity. Classes are offered in traditional arts and crafts such as carpet weaving, embroidery, tile making, calligraphy and miniature painting. AIL has one center at Herat’s Citadel historic complex. This center focuses solely on traditional arts and crafts. AIL also promotes Afghan poetry at its Love and Forgiveness conferences and poetry is incorporated into learning at LCs and in schools.

HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

Clinics
AIL has long standing fixed medical clinics, two in Kabul and two in Herat. In 2018, AIL expanded its outreach medical clinic operations and now has 4 clinics at AIL centers as well as the long standing sites at an orphanage and street children facility. Each clinic provides medical treatment, reproductive health services, nutrition care, preventive care and health education.

"I am a vaccinator from an AIL clinic. Two days ago I went to the Robat e Naw village, which is a newer village and all the residents are refugees. I wanted to ask if anyone knows anything about vaccination. I first went to ask the mullah from the mosque, but he did not have any information about vaccination. I asked him to gather all residents so I could explain the important role of vaccination in the lives of every individual. After I finished my explanation, all the residents decided to refer their children to the clinic for vaccination. They also thanked me for teaching them about vaccination."

The Herat area Community Health Worker (CHW) program continues to be supported by AIL clinics at Jaghartan and Maladan in 14 village posts. These CHWs are the frontline in medical care in villages and deal with basic care and preventive care and refer patients to the two Herat
clinics as needed. The program works well as the CHWs are local people from the village so are known, trusted and have good relationships with people already in place before they receive training. In the year, CHWs visited families 37,725 times.

In 2016, AIL initiated a new outreach health program for its LCs and the Professor Sakena Yacoobi Private Schools. Medical staff and health educators now give complete checkups and vaccinations, if needed, to all students twice a year.

In 2018, the AIL health program gave 246,152 patient treatments and gave health education to 177,406. AIL has always combined its high quality health care with health education. All clinic patients and their families receive health education at every visit.

**Health Workshops**

AIL runs intensive health workshops for women and girls. In 2018, there were 6 multi-day Reproductive Health Workshops for 228 women and 10 Expectant Mother Workshops (EM) for 100 pregnant women and 100 caregivers. Afghanistan has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. The EM workshops provide women with reproductive education and information on the care and raising of their infants. This has led to significant and positive changes.

Since the start of the EM program, 99.8% of women (who reported a birth) chose a clinic/hospital site. There were no maternal deaths or stillbirths reported. Since 2012 none of the reported births have taken place at home. The women pass on the knowledge they gain to
friends and family, thus extending the influence of the workshops far beyond the 1,128 pregnant women and 1,125 helpers who have received direct benefit since 2010.

"My name is Atifa and I am 25 and live in a village. After getting married, I got pregnant and soon after I faced health problems. My husband and I were illiterate and followed traditional customs for pregnancy and raising babies. In other words, I knew nothing. I got weak during pregnancy I used to vomit a lot so I was not able to hold down food.

I participated in the Expectant Mother Workshop about 7 months ago when I was pregnant for the third time. I learned about new and updated prenatal and postnatal subjects. Although I had had 2 children, I did not know these topics. For example, I had never known about pregnancy health and pregnancy care and that I should visit a doctor many times during my pregnancy. I was not aware of good nutrition and taking vitamins and minerals that are good for the baby and mother.

TRAINING

Overall AIL’s goal is to provide comprehensive education and health programs to Afghans so that they can support and take care of themselves. To achieve this goal, AIL believes that training is at the core of each project and is AIL’s most important program area. In 2018, in addition to training teachers and providing workshops to students and civil society members in leadership and human rights, AIL started a Women’s Empowerment Group and held two major conferences.
Teacher Training

AIL provides quality teacher training and ensures its trained teachers get continuing education in methodology but also other topics. AIL is one of only 14 organizations in Herat licensed by the Ministry of Education to provide teacher training for five years starting in 2017.

AIL trained 396 teachers (172 female) in teaching technique seminars. Teachers were also participants in a number of workshops on topics such as: leadership, love and forgiveness, democracy, good governance and health. In all 766 teachers (436 females) improved their knowledge and skills in an AIL workshop.
“I graduated from the Education University three years ago. Since then, I have started teaching in private schools. I usually teach math. I apply all the methods that I have learned in college in my class but surprisingly, I have not achieved the desired results. My students were not successful in math and I felt I was a failure. I wondered what method I should choose in order to promote my students. I was about to lose my job. Although I am adept in my subject, I used to teach roughly. The students did not take part in the class. I lectured in my class as I thought I explained things better than the students do.

Fortunately I got the chance to participate in this AIL methodology seminar. At first I thought that this workshop would be the same as those of other NGOs. I found out I was wrong. The facilitator established a warm and friendly environment among the participants. We interchanged and shared our problems and ideas freely with each other. During these ten days, I figured out the fault in my teaching methods.

Since the seminar I have applied what I learned each day in my class. I saw positive changes in my students. I made my students interested in the subject by applying group work, question and answer and taking quizzes. I really appreciate AIL, for providing this opportunity for us to participate in this useful workshop.”
Leadership

AIL continued its work with empowering women to be leaders and also included men in leadership training. AIL held 9 workshops specifically on leadership for 297 people (254 female).

Here is information on one of the workshops: AIL held a workshop in Herat at the main office for 35 people (16 female, 19 male). The aims of the leadership workshop include: promoting social connections for women, empowering women to take a more proactive role, building self-confidence and leadership skills, promoting fair and equitable behavior between men and women, promoting listening, trust, respect for all opinions, consulting all parties and sharing understandings and raising standards of learning in community in work and home settings.

This workshop focused on leadership, management and youth. Topics included: public speaking, management versus leadership, talent for leadership, difference between administration and leadership, how to enable others, social justice, politics and democracy in community life.

One participant said, “I am interested in youth interest in sport and their mood. How to draw them out of depression. I see that most youth, especially girls struggle with a kind of depression and don’t look very happy. Therefore, I want to create a sports team for girls and take a leadership role. I want to motivate girls to be drawn out of depression, and also would like these girls to develop and make their way to national and to international matches. This is one of my decisions and goals I have set. I want to start on this now.”
AIL takes a broad approach to the subject of leadership and provides workshops on tangential subjects such as good governance, voting, love and forgiveness, violence against women, good citizenship and democracy. In all the leadership building program reached 890 people, 686 women and 154 of them adolescent (ages 10-19).

Conferences
AIL held two major conferences in 2019. The first was on Love and Forgiveness for 100 people (68 female) and the second on Good Governance for 200 people (150 female).

The Love and Forgiveness conference was attended by people aged 17 to 44. They were from many backgrounds including lawyers, teachers, housewives, managers, employees and university and high school students. The aim was to help people replace anger and hate with love and understanding for their fellow human beings, moving to acceptance and forgiveness. People listened to speakers, worked in small groups and had moments of reflection based on poetry readings.

The Good Governance conference brought together people aged 17 to 46 to discuss ideas, share information and educate them on the latest concepts related to governance. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring there is proper social functioning and social cohesion based on rule of law, equality, social justice and trust and compassion.

One participant said, “I learned that the lack of social justice and lack of a strong and ethical state holds society back from reaching harmony and making a good future possible for all its people.”
Women’s Empowerment Group

Since its founding in 1995, one of AIL’s major goals has been to provide programs to educate, train and empower women. A number of Afghan women have now earned university, masters and doctorate degrees. In 2018, Dr. Yacoobi decided to begin working with a number of these educated women working in various positions in Herat Province to assist them to become better leaders, have more influence in the country and learn to work together for common goals. Initially, 80 women between the ages of 25 and 50 with university degrees were invited to attend this new AIL Women’s Empowerment Class. Many of the women also had Masters or Doctorate degrees. There were university professors, doctors, lawyers, judges, journalists, poets, teachers, researchers, business owners, members of parliament, and district, provincial and ministry administrators.

The women needed to agree to the requirements of the class, which included communicating by Telegram daily on various topics and meeting together around one topic every two weeks. The class was facilitated by Dr. Yacoobi and senior AIL staff. Because of work and other commitments, not all of the women who were initially invited were able to meet all of the requirements and receive a certificate; however, all were welcome to participate in as many of the activities as they were able.

Throughout the year the women discussed many topics, including peace, democracy, service to community and how to run as a politician and support the country. They studied values such as honesty, responsibility and ethics. Most recently, the group covered six major topics in depth in Telegram and through meetings:

- Good Governance (having a good government, national unity, the government and people and being a united society),
- Women’s Solidarity (how women stay together, role of women in politics, their role in management and building the capacity of women),
During the year, the members of the Women’s Empowerment Class formed what is now called the Women’s Empowerment Group (WEG). The 37 women, who received a certificate at the end of the year, have now become life-long members of the Women’s Empowerment Group. They have office space in AIL’s Herat office. They have committed to attend at least three meetings each year. They have an opportunity to work with the AIL Research Group on various topics and they have agreed to speak at AIL conferences from time to time.

As a result of attending the class the women now feel supported and empowered to take on greater leadership roles. One of the major things that they have learned is the importance of supporting each other and working together. Outcomes from the year-long program have been remarkable. In 6-8 months every member put themselves forward as a candidate for some sort of office or elected position. After the elections, members of the group joined together to continue to support the winners. There was no competition or trying to put the other women down. This is a change in attitude to one of supporting others in their new roles, rather than jealousy and failing to accept leadership by the winners.

AIL will be starting a new Women’s Empowerment Class in 2019 and men are now requesting that AIL hold such a class for them.
LEGAL CLINIC FOR WOMEN

AIL opened its legal clinic in Herat in 2015 with a team of five experienced, female lawyers. The Legal Clinic assists women introduced through the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Human Rights Commission, as well as women who hear about the project over the radio or through other means. The clinic also helps men if required. Women, who are very poor, are represented for free. Others pay as they are able.

In 2018, the legal clinic dealt with 136 cases the majority are concluded within a month. Topics of cases include: murder, robbery, divorce, kidnapping, VAW, traffic accidents, business, inheritance, child abuse, alimony, early marriage, drug trafficking. In addition to advising and defending women in court cases, the lawyers in the project also speak on Dr. Yacoobi’s Radio Meraj informing women of their rights, educating people on the laws of the country and responding to call-in questions. Topics covered in radio broadcasts include: Islamic law, election law, women’s rights and business issues.

Narges’ husband Abdul, died as a result of receiving an injection. His relatives started a case against her suspecting her of causing her husband’s death. Narges is a nurse in the Herat Public Hospital. For a long time, she had been a victim of this husband’s physical and mental violence, but she never complained to any organization in order to respect her family and to keep their reputation in society. She got married to him as an 8 year old, but she accepted this and all the problems and lived with him. Her husband continued his violence towards her for years even although he was sick.

Every month he was taking a serum injection. During the last month before he died, he came home with the serum and sedative medicine. Narges gave him the injection of the serum and started
doing the household chores. After doing the chores, she came to her husband, but found him motionless and unconscious. In the morning she took him to the doctor, and the doctor declared him deceased. The first court hearing of her case was held, and she was found guilty of his death because of the case's sensitivity through the media. Her second court session is now running and her defense is continuing with the clinic lawyers.

SUPPORT FOR RADIO MERAJ

Dr. Yacoobi’s radio station, Radio Meraj, which is housed in AIL Herat’s offices and partially supported by AIL staff, continues to increase its listenership. Programs are broadcast 18 hours each day and reach millions of listeners in 7 of 8 districts of Herat Province. There are 13 live programs and 17 pre-recorded. The programs are primarily educational and informational, with a number of opportunities for listener feedback and call in questions; the station averages at least 175 calls, text messages or emails each day.

Radio Meraj continues to win awards and in 2018 again won 3 prizes at the Herat Media Awards Festival. The event was open to all vocal, pictorial and print media. Meraj received the prizes for: Best News Announcer: Meraj has professional on-air staff who are both genial and serious in their presentation, which adds to the trust level and engagement that audiences have with the station. Best News Service: this was from a pool of 21 active radio stations and was for accurate reporting, developing news and best style of news broadcast. Best Report: this was won by one of Meraj’s female reporters. She was encouraged by management to develop her journalist skills and presentation.

In the summer, Meraj was invited to send its Director of Publications to participate in the week-long Conference of South Asian Countries in Nepal. Only 3 journalists from Afghanistan were
invited. The director was able to play a role in bilateral talks with the authorities and gave a speech about Meraj and its activities. He was part of one of the strongest and most active teams participating from Afghanistan out of the group that included China, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. All the staff are proud that Meraj is one of the top stations both in Herat and regionally after only 3 years of operation. A staff person said, “A major goal of our programs is to enlighten minds and opinions of Meraj listeners. We work to help women to take a more active role in society and also to look after their families better through planning and management. For youth and children we have programs that aim to discourage negative behaviors, to make youth interested in studying and taking an active role in the country’s development.”

SUPORT FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

AIL also provides technical assistance (teacher training, curriculum development, leadership training, student health exams and other staff assistance) to Dr. Yacoobi’s four private schools. The high quality of its programs has resulted in the schools receiving excellence awards from the Ministry of Education. In December, one Herat school received the International School Award from the British Council for its integration of international learning in the school.

AIL also supports the 2-year Student Leadership Course which has 30 students, 15 female and 15 male. They learn about all manner of leadership topics as well as other subjects such as English, politics and democracy and community projects. They do course work, reading and presentations
and engage in field trips such as visiting an AIL Learning Center, community clean-ups and visiting Radio Meraj.

Morsal, a student of the leadership class said, "In my mind, the most important thing that we, the teenagers, need to learn is actually those activities we need to do when we serve other people. This way we can improve our country. Our teacher is always telling us that if you want to empower people, you need to empower ourselves first.

Every human being needs knowledge and awareness. Today we should learn about how to live successfully tomorrow. We learned in leadership class that reading is like a beacon in our life. Afghans spend less time studying compared to others. This is one of the reasons that our country is underdeveloped. Our teacher says that people will change if they get used to doing two things: studying and exercising.

We realized the importance of time through this class. When you get the importance of something, nothing can stop you from reaching it. We study one book every month. Then we present the main points of the book in class. We have been following this for more than a year. Now studying has become a daily habit for us. If I don’t study some pages every day, I feel lost."

EMERGENCY AID

AIL provides emergency food aid when it is needed. Natural disasters can strike at any time such as drought, floods and extreme cold weather. These present challenges for the poor whose ability to get by is already running on a day by day basis. AIL is able to help with supplies of oil, beans, rice, meat and bread. Recipients are identified by the leaders in the local communities where AIL works.

In 2018, hundreds of families received aid and numerous others were provided with food during Ramadan distributions.
PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

AIL is continuing to develop plans to open a Women’s University and a TV Station in Herat.

**AIL Women’s University** will have an emphasis on training women to be leaders. In 2018, AIL opened an English Language Center, which is helping prospective students improve their English language skills while studying at the university.

The **TV Meraj** station will showcase AIL educational programming. TV equipment has been purchased and the physical facility in the AIL Herat office building is ready. Two staff members are working on creating an archive of programs for use when the station starts broadcasting. AIL is waiting for final government approval and the allocation of digital frequencies for the station.
# AFGHAN INSTITUTE OF LEARNING

## CONSOLIDATED

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

#### 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>$ 1,155,137</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$ 1,112,581</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials, equipment</td>
<td>118,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent &amp; utilities</td>
<td>57,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>19,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships, stipends</td>
<td>21,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, travel</td>
<td>93,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank charges, membership</td>
<td>12,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>789,394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL EXPENSE</th>
<th>$ 1,112,581</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET INCOME</th>
<th>$42,556</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Working in Afghanistan can be very challenging but the rewards are great! I see the joy and hope in people’s faces as they improve their life skills, gain confidence through education and discover their capacity.

Afghans are a strong people and make the most of opportunity when they encounter it. Our work is appreciated by everyone we work with. People want to improve their health and education and make a better life for themselves and their children.

Thank you for your support for our work.

Dr. Sakena Yacoobi