Extraordinary response
to COVID-19 crisis by AIL

2020 has been challenging for the Afghan Institute of Learning, in ways we could not have imagined. From February, when the far reaching impact of the pandemic became apparent, staff adapted programs to the changing situation and needs of people,

“We looked out the window and saw a crowd gathering outside the gate. They were desperate for help. They had lost their jobs and needed food now. They were without masks and had nowhere to get them and did not understand how to protect themselves from the virus. We immediately started providing cooked meals, food parcels, and our tailoring classes converted to PPE production with Radio Meraj broadcasting virus information & safety precautions.”
- AIL Women’s Center Manager

Lockdown meant workers, especially day laborers became immediately in need of assistance and had nowhere to turn to for aid or information. The situation was made worse by thousands of repatriating Afghans coming across the border from Iran.

AIL was able to donate sanitation supplies to the government and to continue providing health care at clinics. Staff have been working tirelessly to provide aid and keep our students engaged.

AIL distance education
It was vital during the lockdown to continue education, especially for children. So AIL adapted its education programs to distance learning, providing study packets, video lessons, Whatsapp and Telegram groups. Teachers remained available by email, a hotline and in person for students from illiterate households or without internet access. Students and their parents were thrilled to be able to continue education while confined to home.

In the later part of the year, schools and Learning Centers were able to reopen with strict sanitation and social distancing protocols in place. This is far from ideal but returning our youth to some form of normality was vital to stave off another crisis of lost education, rise in child marriage and increase in domestic violence and child abuse. AIL has provided counseling services to help families in lockdown.
Fortunately, the Bon Center in India has remained COVID-19 free. The 166 students continued with their studies with distance learning for a few months and then returned to the classroom in August. CHI supports students from poor families, living in Nepal and Tibet, who come to the center to gain a quality education.

AIL health clinics

COVID-19 necessitated changes at AIL clinics with regard to sanitation procedures and an increase in capacity, as other local clinics closed down. Staff worked extra hours to accommodate patient care. COVID-19 patients are referred to government hospitals and other patients are treated by AIL staff. The health education section increased its capacity and produced informative posters and leaflets about the virus for patients and also for distribution in the community.

COVID-19 hospital & flood relief

In response to the lack of any medical facility capable of dealing with Covid-19 patients, AIL set up a hospital in the Mir Bacha Kot community. This collaborative effort with the Department of Health changed lives and gave hope to local people. August brought devastating flooding to Parwan Province in Afghanistan and AIL was able to respond, providing clothing, blankets, floor mats and shovels to the families affected.

AIL was able to hold some of its usual workshop program. There were 3 reproductive health workshops for 150 women and 247 teachers attended methodology workshops with another 368 participating in other workshops. 827 people attended workshops in subjects such as leadership and peace. TV Meraj continued to develop an archive of programs and created numerous clips about the severe impact of COVID and, AIL relief efforts. AIL’s free Legal Clinic assisted 59 clients through the year and the Research Center presented the first ever paper in Afghanistan on e-learning in the country.

COVID-19 Work
25,504 Students
21,842 PPE Families
6 Health Clinics
50 beds Covid-19 hospital
185,000 Patient treatments
146,000 Health education
11,940 Food aid families
18 Radio broadcasts daily
9 Provinces reached

In 2020, Dr. Yacoobi was honored to be named as an Aurora Humanitarian and to receive the Stand Up Leadership Award.

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