



Working Together....

Creating Hope International

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December 2009 Newsletter

Bringing Change to Afghanistan by Empowering Communities

A message by Sakena Yacoobi

First, I want to thank all of you for supporting the work of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL). Your support is so important. Yes, the funds you send help us to bring education and health to so many Afghan women and children. But, more importantly, in this time of increasing violence and insecurity in Afghanistan, your support helps Afghans to know **that they are not forgotten**. It gives ordinary Afghan women, men and children the courage to keep studying, to keep going to clinics and to keep working for peace.

Today you probably hear that Afghanistan is a place of war, terrorist bombings, burning of schools, kidnapping, drugs and all kinds of other horrible things. And it is true that in every province of Afghanistan, including the capitol, every single day, these kinds of things are happening. But what you might not hear in your news is that everyday many women, men and children of Afghanistan get up in the morning..... say goodbye to their family.....and go to work..... go to schools and centers go to trainings.....because they know that they must be educated. They know that the only way they can stop these problems is to be educated. So they are learning, they are teaching and they are not afraid.

And when there is no electricity or no clean water or no school or no road or no job and there is no help from the national government or the international agencies, Afghans, particularly **women**, are **joining together in community** or with their local officials to find ways to solve their own problems. And, with your help, AIL is helping them to do this.

I want to let you know that as dark as it seems to be in Afghanistan now, much is happening. Afghans, themselves, are changing. They are educating themselves; they are making sure that their children are educated; they are finding new ways to solve their problems. I would ask you to walk with us a little further on our journey towards peace.



Sakena Yacoobi, founder and executive director of the Afghan Institute of Learning and vice president on the board of directors of Creating Hope International.



AIL impact since 1996

- **6.9 million Afghans** received education, health and training services
- **1 million** clinic patients received health services
- **1.6 million women** given health education
- **16,440 teachers** trained
- **3, 469,590 students** have a better education because of the training of their teachers
- **13,182** trained in leadership, capacity building and health workshops
- **234,778 students** educated in schools and centers
- **316 grassroots,** community-based schools, centers and clinics supported



Working Together at the Grassroots Brings Education, Security and Jobs

A message by Toc Dunlap, Executive Director

This year we decided to look in depth at the impact that AIL is having in Afghanistan. We knew that that AIL was doing phenomenal work ,but even we were surprised at the number of women and children AIL has

reached in 14 years—6.9 million. That is **amazing!!!** But even more amazing is the **transformation** that is occurring because AIL works at the grassroots level and asks for contributions from the community. The seeds that have been planted are bearing fruit. Individuals are learning from AIL's model and starting projects in their own communities. Community members are joining with AIL to start education and health centers. Local government agencies and AIL are joining together to increase the quality of education in schools. With support at the grassroots, projects are secure and Afghans have education, health services and jobs.

On the next page are stories of just a few of the creative projects which have been implemented with the help of AIL's leadership. **Afghans still need your help.** Your donation to Creating Hope International for our Afghan project will help Afghans continue to transform their lives.





Project 1—Villagers and AIL Working Together

In a village in Herat, there was no school. One family donated a piece of land, and with funding from many of you, AIL dug a well—and all the villagers had access to clean water. AIL then built a Women's Learning Center, and the villagers built a road to the center. Now more than 900 women and children from this village and other nearby villages are coming to the Center to study, become tailors and carpet weavers, and learn about health, human rights, leadership and peace. At the request of the village elders, AIL has provided a literacy teacher for men to learn to read and write at night after their work in the local mosque. Because there is no clinic in the area, AIL sends a mobile health clinic weekly to the center. **Villagers and AIL have built a community.**



Afghan women and girls plan a project

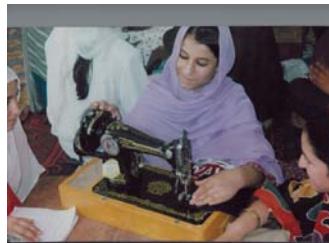
Project 2—AIL and local government bring health education to schools

For years AIL has been giving health schools, there was no health education. This teachers began in June—already these education to women in their clinics and year, local Herat health and education teachers have taught their students about teaching about health in AIL centers and government officials asked AIL to join with health and hygiene. **By year end, 189,000** schools. Afghans are learning to be healthier them to begin training government teachers **students and teachers** will have benefited and prevent disease. But in the government to provide health education. Training of from this joint effort to improve health.

Project 3—AIL-trained leader starts community loan project for women

Anisa is part of an **Emerging Leader group** of young Afghan women and men who meet monthly in AIL offices. The Emerging Leaders discuss how to bring peace to Afghanistan and explore projects that might help their communities. Anisa decided to start a revolving loan project for women in her community. She and another young woman gathered 120 women, who had no access to credit, from their community. These women agreed to join together, put money into a loan fund and abide by the rules of the group. The group meets weekly and each bring whatever money they can. These amounts are recorded. When there is enough in the fund, the names of the contributors are put in a bowl and a name is drawn. The woman whose name is drawn receives the money in the loan fund for her chosen needs. All of the women have agreed to continue contributing money, so

there is always money in the fund. This project has been going on for almost 5 months and has been very successful. Women, some of whom are orphans, have been able to pay for operations for family members, for weddings and for housing.



Project 4— A young woman starts a tailoring class in her village

One young woman from a village convinced her father to let her go to AIL's Women's Learning Center. There she learned to read and write and to be a tailor. She also participated in a leadership workshop and began to realize that she, too, could be a leader. Once she went back to her village, she began sewing clothes for her family and relatives. Other women wanted to learn to sew, so she opened a tailoring class in her home for women and girls and taught them. She asked that AIL staff come to evaluate her class. If her students meet AIL standards, she asked that they receive the AIL certificate once finished. **AIL agreed.**

SUGGESTED READING:
Nasreen's Secret School
by Jeanette Winter
Guess whose underground school she attended?