

# Creating Hope International

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## Rebuilding Peace Through Afghan Cultural Heritage

### AIL'S IMPACT IN 2011

- 970,921 Afghans received education, health services and teacher training (8.9 million since 1996)
- 143,203 Afghans (70% women) received health services (1.4 million since 1996)
- 161,245 Afghan women received health education (1.9 million since 1996)
- 1,266 teachers trained (19,430 since 1996)
- 4.6 million students of trained teachers have a better education and learn critical thinking skills
- 3,844 trained in leadership, human rights, peace, administration and health (18,522 since 1996)
- 338 grassroots community-based schools, centers and clinics supported

**AIL** believes in community empowerment, and so it begins the work of transforming Afghan people by waiting for communities or groups to approach them with a need. AIL then works with them as equal partners to help develop programs that meet their needs. Initially, these communities asked us for help in bringing literacy and job skills to their people. Once people are taught any subject through AIL's interactive methodologies designed to build critical thinking skills, they become hungry to learn more. As a result, communities have asked for more opportunities, and we have responded, helping Afghans to move forward.

Using a multi-pronged, holistic, community-based approach, AIL's work over the past decade, particularly in and around Herat, has reached somewhat of a tipping point in the lives of enough people so that we can see some measurable societal change. Now many Afghans, are asking for the opportunity to learn more about their culture which was destroyed during decades of war. They want to know who they were before the war, and they desire to rekindle their history and restore an historical identity. Learning more about where you have been is often a key step in moving forward as a society — seeing that you come from a heritage that honors art, the printed word, and peaceful relations with others. It helps to bring back a feeling of belonging to something greater than the individual and a new understanding of how individuals relate to the whole. People feel worthy and able to take the steps necessary to move their current culture forward while honoring the past.

The Afghan people are now ready to take this step, and during this past year, AIL developed projects to meet this need, touching every segment of Afghan society at its own level and need. In April 2011, the Afghan Institute of Learning signed an agreement with the Ministry of Information and Culture to work in the cultural sector with officials of the local government in Herat. Immediately, the staff members of AIL set to work on setting up a wide array of cultural programs.

The Gawhar Shad Musalla Complex, was chosen to house many different aspects of the cultural programs. It dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and is currently being restored. In May the Gawhar Shad Begum Library and Research Center opened through AIL support in the Gawhar Shad Mausoleum. Since its opening, thousands of local students and general public members

December 2011



**Sakena Yacoobi**  
Afghan Institute of  
Learning Executive  
Director and Vice  
President of Creating  
Hope International

Over

## Sakena's Report (continued)

have visited the library. Building on the books initially purchased by AIL, teachers and civil society members have donated another 1,500 books to the library collection. Many university students have come to the library to study, and several high schools have brought their students to the library for tours. A public library in such a public place is placing the value of knowledge in high esteem as was the case in Afghan history.

Through this project AIL is saving the environment, preserving the park in the Complex, and making sure that drug users do not come and stay there again. Now the Gawhar Shad Musalla Complex is kept clean and beautiful with the help of some people who are interested in preserving the historical sites of Herat.



**Women learn traditional skills like carpet weaving at the Herat Citadel.**



**Computer classes offer invaluable skills for today's Afghans.**

Just down the road from the Gawhar Shad Musalla Complex is the restored, 2,000-year-old Herat Citadel where AIL established several classrooms to teach the traditional arts and skills of Afghanistan. Classes are offered in calligraphy, miniature painting, carpet weaving, silk weaving, glass making and tile making. Some of the instructors have degrees in art from Herat University and others are skilled craftsmen who have been performing their trade for years.

This year AIL reinitiated the publishing of its magazine. Issues were published in April and July, and a third will be published before the end of the year. Three thousand copies of each quarterly publication are made available to the public.

This multi-faceted, cultural project develops leadership in ways that empowers Afghans to be self-sustainable. They are taking pride in the peaceful, sophisticated culture they once had before the wars. They are finding their roots of peace, beauty, and knowledge. This cultural project encourages a rebuilding of identity and value in every Afghan it touches. It is another step forward on the path toward a future, educated, healthy Afghanistan.

## We Continue to Need Your Support

**AIL** who have supported AIL over the years have helped AIL to educate Afghan women and children, to train their teachers and to improve their health. Your support is truly helping to build the base for peace in Afghanistan. As Afghans lives are transformed by education and improved health, they are beginning to rediscover their culture and history. They are learning how to live in peace despite the insecurity that continues in their country. There is still more to be done and it takes all of us working together — AIL, the Afghan communities and Afghanistan's world neighbors — all of you. We ask you to continue to support AIL as we move on to work with more communities who wish to transform **their** lives through education and training. To support our work is to help bring peace to Afghanistan and the world.

**Tax deductible donations made payable to Creating Hope International are greatly appreciated. Mail to:  
Creating Hope International  
P. O. Box 1058  
Dearborn, MI 48121**

## Significant Events 2011

- ◆ AIL held 6 Women's Health Workshops for 206 women through its new rural centers in remote Wardak and Logar provinces; the first access to health education that these women have had.
- ◆ The Professor Sakena Yacoobi Private Hospital and Clinic officially opened in February. Open 24 /7, it serves more than 2,000 patients monthly. AIL continues to provide technical support.