



Dining for Women

## PROGRAM FACT SHEET

**PROGRAM:** Creating Hope International (CHI), the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL)

**WEBSITES:** [www.creatinghope.org/](http://www.creatinghope.org/)  
[www.creatinghope.org/aboutail](http://www.creatinghope.org/aboutail)

**MISSION:** *Creating Hope International provides education and health assistance to the people in the world with the greatest needs; with the goal of empowering the recipients to ultimately be able to meet their own needs.*

*CHI has partnered with the internationally recognized Afghan Institute of Learning, to improve the health and education of Afghan women and children, relieving their suffering and enhancing the quality of their lives after three decades of war and civil strife.*

**WHERE THEY SERVE:** AIL currently supports Afghanistan health and education centers in Herat, Kabul, Bamiyan, Mazar and Parwan as well as centers in Peshawar, Pakistan.

**WHY THIS ISSUE IS SO IMPORTANT:** In the wake of natural or human-made disasters, such as the thirty years of war and civil strife in Afghanistan, everyday people struggle to obtain those things which are often taken for granted: food, shelter, health care, employment and education. Lacking these life necessities, people are deprived of the self-dignity and self-determination so crucial to the human spirit. AIL believes that educated people are the key to a future, developed Afghanistan. With that in mind, AIL works to empower all Afghans who are needy and oppressed by expanding their educational and health opportunities and by fostering self-reliance and community participation.

### COUNTRY AT-A-GLANCE: Afghanistan



#### Country Facts:

- Capital – Kabul
- Geographic Size – 647,500 (slightly smaller than Texas)
- Climate – arid to semiarid; hot summers and cold winters
- Population – 32,738,376 (July 2008 est.)
- Median Age – 17.6 years old
- Average Life Expectancy – 44.21 years
- Fertility rate: 6.58 born/woman
- Literacy rate – 28.1% of the population can read and write by age 15. The literacy rate for women is 12.6%

- Ethnic groups – Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, Turkmen, Baloch
  - Religions – Sunni Muslim, Shia Muslim
  - Major Exports – Fruit and nuts, carpets, wool and opium
- *Brief History of Afghanistan* - Afghanistan was founded in 1747. Until gaining independence from British control in 1919, Afghanistan served as a buffer between the British and Russian empires. In 1973, Afghanistan's fledgling democracy was ended by a coup, and in 1978 by a Communist counter-coup. In 1979 a long period of war began when the Soviet Union invaded to support the Afghan Communist regime. This period of war lasted until 1989 when the USSR withdrew. A series of civil wars followed, with Kabul falling to the Taliban in 1996. The Taliban remained in power until multi-national forces toppled the regime in 2001, beginning a period of reconstruction. In 2004 a presidential election was held, and subsequently National Assembly elections in 2005. While steps toward a stable central government have been made, the resurging Taliban and continuing instability in the provinces remain challenges for Afghanistan.
  - *Economy* - After decades of conflict, Afghanistan's economy is in a state of recovery. Largely due to an influx of international assistance after 2001 as well as the recovery of the agricultural and service sectors, there has been significant improvement. Despite this improvement, Afghanistan is extremely poor, landlocked, dependant on foreign aid, agriculture and trade with neighboring countries. Much of the population suffers from a lack of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care and jobs. Future economic growth is challenged by criminality, insecurity and the government's inability to rule over all parts of the country. Afghanistan's living standards are among the lowest in the world, and it will probably take the remainder of the decade and continued international aid to raise these standards. Many challenges need to be overcome including the opium trade, job creating, corruption, government capacity and rebuilding a war torn infrastructure.

## CHI and AIL STORIES:

**Creating Hope International** CHI has a long history of empowering Afghans through health and educational services, community building, and culturally sensitive programs. CHI works at the grass roots level, responding to community needs, fostering community participation, and empowering people through culturally sensitive education and training with a vision of improving the daily lives of the underserved who are often silent victims.

Since 1996, through a long-term technical assistance agreement, CHI has worked closely with the Afghan Institute of Learning, providing advice, training and technical assistance with administration, finance, program, strategic planning, vision development, fundraising, budgeting, and proposal writing. CHI also acts as AIL's fiscal sponsor.

**Afghan Institute of Learning** The Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) is an Afghan women's non-governmental organization (NGO) which was founded in 1995 by Professor Sakena Yacoobi to help address the problem of poor access for women and children to education and health services, their subsequent inability to support their lives, and the impact of this lack of education and health on Afghan society. AIL is run by Afghan women and plays a major part in reconstructing education and health systems capable of reaching the women and children of Afghanistan--whether in refugee camps or still in their homes.

With Creating Hope International's help, AIL has grown from a small, local Afghan women's community-based organization with an annual budget of approximately \$30,000 to a large, internationally recognized, non-governmental organization with a broad array of quality health and education services that are changing hundreds of thousands of lives for the better. AIL is now one of the largest Afghan women-led NGOs and provides health and education services to **350,000** women and children annually and employs approximately 480 people, over 70% of whom are Afghanistan women.

Now that AIL is an established NGO with a track record of success, AIL has begun to provide training and technical assistance to small local Afghan community-based organizations to help build the capacity of Afghanistan's civil society sector. AIL's goals include establishing a foundation for quality education and health for years to come.

**HOW AIL'S PROGRAM WORKS:** AIL requires community participation in all of its projects. Believing that the best results are achieved when everyone is integrally involved, AIL works with community leaders in the planning, developing and implementation of all projects. No project is started unless the community has requested it and is involved in it. Utilizing this visionary strategy, communities now contribute 30 to 50 percent of the resources needed for a project. In the case of Community Based Organizations, the contribution by the community can be as high as 90% of the cost of the project with AIL providing administrative and teacher training, oversight and a small amount of funding for partial salaries. These community contributions have come in many forms, including volunteer help, assistance with security, and donated space, materials, and supplies. These contributions have strengthened the communities' involvement in and ownership of AIL programs and are part of ongoing efforts towards achieving sustainability.

**WHAT OUR COLLECTIVE DONATIONS WILL SUPPORT:** Our *DFW* donations will directly support health services and health education for the rural Afghan females that come to the Afghan Institute of Learning's clinics in Herat, Afghanistan.

**Herat Health Program** AIL began working in Afghanistan in 1997, supporting underground home schools for girls in Herat, Kabul, Logar and Jalalabad. Subsequently, AIL also began supporting a clinic for women in Jalalabad and door to door health education and health services for women in Kabul.

In 2002, as Afghanistan began the enormous job of establishing a government and rebuilding a country and society almost 90% destroyed by years of war, AIL also began to facilitate the reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan, assisting communities to provide schooling for women and children with no other access to education and supporting health programs in rural areas where there were no health services. To assist Afghans to become self-sufficient, AIL began providing education and training to a population that is mostly illiterate.

In Herat, AIL began training teachers and supporting Women's Learning Centers (WLC) to teach women and children to read and write and to provide skills training in such things as tailoring, beauty parlor management, embroidery and carpet weaving.

In the area of health, the Herat Ministry of Health asked AIL to support Jagartan Health Clinic located in a rural area in Herat Province. In 2002, AIL began providing health services and health education to Afghans in more than 25 rural villages through the Jagartan Health Clinic. AIL's clinic is unique because of its emphasis on health education. Every woman (and their children), who come to the clinic for health services, also receives health messages daily on such topics as reproductive health, nutrition, hygiene, vaccinations, pre and

post natal care and other topics which would help the women to understand how to keep themselves and their children and other family members healthy and prevent illness.

Because of AIL's success in Jagartan clinic, in 2005, the Herat Ministry of Health asked AIL to begin supporting another rural clinic in Imam Shish Nur. The clinic facility had been built by an international donor but there were no funds to provide services through the clinic. AIL had established WLCs in villages near the clinic and knew that the health services were desperately needed. AIL was able to find partial funding for the clinic and began providing health services and health education a month after the government's request. Due to the large number of patients coming to existing AIL clinics, and the lack of services in distant villages in Herat Province, in 2008 the Herat Ministry of Health requested that AIL support a small, basic care clinic in Maladan. The Maladan clinic began operating under the supervision of the Jagartan clinic in August of this year.

In an effort to provide on-going health services and upgrade the health capacity of individuals and communities in these rural areas of Herat Province, AIL has committed to the Afghan Ministry of Health to provide support for the Jagartan, Imam Shish Nur and Maladan Clinics through 2010.

Over the last two years, the number of patients at the clinics has more than doubled. From January 2007 through November 2008, the three clinics treated 187,134 patients, provided health education to 113,753 women and vaccinated 60,978 women and children. In coordination with the Herat Ministry of Health, Community Health Workers (CHWs) have been trained and the CHW program is flourishing in three clinics. Each team of community health workers is comprised of one male and one female worker from each village. From January 2007 through November 2008, the CHW teams, which are administered by the three clinics, visited families with 157,559 families, giving them health education and services as needed. Located in rural areas, each clinic serves 25-30 villages with health services that they would not receive otherwise because city hospitals are too far and do not provide adequate services. AIL has seen the health of the patients coming to the clinics improve and health education has helped a great deal to prevent serious illnesses.

**FINANCIAL PROFILE:** In 2007, CHI operated on a \$422,856 budget and directed only 4% of revenue toward administration and fund raising expenses.

**DFW GIVING HISTORY WITH PROGRAM:** New program

#### **SOURCES AND RESOURCES:**

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/country\\_profiles/1162668.stm#facts](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/country_profiles/1162668.stm#facts)

<http://afghaninstituteoflearning.org>

<http://creatinghope.org/>