

Read with Me in Flooded Regions of Iran



Report No. 3

March 2020



IBBY Children in Crisis Fund

Project Title	Read with Me in Flooded Regions
Implemented by	Read with Me Group affiliated to the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature
Sponsored by	IBBY Children in Crisis Fund
Covered Regions	Lorestan Province (KhorramAbad, Doroud, Poldokhtar), Khuzestan Province (Gourieh)
Start Date	April 2019
Status	Ongoing



Project Summary



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Introduction

Since the beginnings of the series of destructive floods all over Iran in spring 2019, Read with Me experts have been attempting to evaluate the possibilities and conditions to organize a program for helping flooded regions, utilizing their 2-year long experience among children shaken by the Kermanshah earthquakes.

Taking its former experiences with children in crisis into account, the “Read with Me” program introduced two major phases for helping children and families struggling with flooding.

Short-term:

Dispatching trained volunteers with Book Backpacks and Book Packages to flooded regions during the initial days and weeks of flooding with the purpose of Bibliotherapy through Reading Aloud quality books, having dialogue with children and carrying out various book-related activities, in order to help them cope better with the emotional pressures of this crisis.

Long-term:

Continuous training workshops for volunteers, tutors and residents of flooded regions as well as establishing child-centered libraries as lasting reading bases for children and their families.

After a number of travels to the flood-stricken areas, consulting local organizations and promoters, and evaluating the capacities and potentials, Read with Me designed three long-term projects:

1. Implementation of the “Creative Education through Children's Literature” learning literacy program in underserved kindergartens in cities and villages in Lorestan Province (in cooperation with Lorestan Welfare Organization)
2. Establishing a Read with Me child-centered library in Gourieh, Khuzestan Province and implementing the “Creative Education through Children's Literature” learning literacy program for local volunteers (in cooperation with local promoters and benefactors)
3. Establishing a Read with Me child-centered library in Poldokhtar, Lorestan Province and reading promotion in schools (in cooperation with Poldokhtar Education Office)



Kindergartens in Lorestan

Part one

Project Title	Read with Me in Lorestan Kindergartens
Implemented by	Read with Me Group affiliated to the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature
Sponsored by	IBBY Children in Crisis Fund
Covered Regions	KhorramAbad, Doroud, Poldokhtar
Number of Kindergartens	36
Number of Teachers	54
Number of Children	1400
Start Date	April 2019
Status	Ongoing



Project Summary

36 Kindergartens in marginal and underserved districts of Lorestan Province, especially those more severely affected by flood, joined the project. 54 kindergarten teachers and principals and more than 1400 children aged between 3 and 6 years old in KhorramAbad, Doroud and Poldokhtar were covered.



Project Highlights

- Sending quality books and Basic Literacy Packages along with activity sheets and other supplements (once in October 2019 and the other set in December 2019)
- Sending Wall-mounted Cloth Book Holders for kindergartens covered by the project
- Holding two rounds of workshops for teachers (Basic Literacy Improvement through Literature, Reading Aloud, Children's Literature, Book-related activities and art) in October and December 2019
- Monitoring the project and guiding teachers for holding read-aloud sessions and doing the follow-up activities
- Traveling to the covered regions and visiting the teachers' activities in their classrooms, and helping them to improve their works.



First round of workshops – Basic Literacy Improvement through Literature, October 2019

In October 2019, “Basic Literacy Improvement through Literature” workshops were held for teachers introducing Phonological Awareness Skills and Phonemic Awareness Skills and their importance in the pre-school education. After the workshop each participant received a set of Basic Literacy Packages.



Creating and joining groups on social media to connect with teachers and monitor their activities

After the first round of the workshops, the Read with Me Trainers added the workshop participants into a group on Telegram App to follow their activities and give them necessary advices. All teachers in the group share reports, pictures and short videos of their activities with children and by this mean, the Read with Me trainers are able to evaluate and improve their job.



First visit to the kindergartens covered by the project, December 2019

In December 2019, a group of Read with Me experts traveled to the region to visit teachers and their activities in the classrooms.

Due to numerous villages and long distance between villages the experts divided into two groups so they can visit the most possible number of the kindergartens.



Second round of workshops – Reading Aloud and Children’s Literature, December 2019



After visiting and evaluating the teachers activities in their classrooms, second round of the workshops were held for teachers focusing on reading aloud technics, book-related activities, children’s literature, and story elements.

At the end of this workshops each teacher received a package of quality books for their classroom.



Future Tasks

Another visit to the region and evaluation of the progress had been scheduled for April 2020. But due to the Coronavirus outbreak and school closures, the travel to the region should be postponed. During this time, the Read with Me experts try to guide teachers to promote reading via social media and every possible means.

Achievements

- The teachers have stated that the project has had great impacts during this short time. Low quality and dull environment of kindergartens has been changed to joyful and creative ones. Both teachers and children have become more cheerful and enthusiastic. Children are more motivated and they learn more deeply. They participate in group activities and show self-confidence. They can express their feelings more easily. The teachers believe that quality books have affected themselves and they enjoy books and activities as well as the children.
- In this region all teachers have an active role in implementing the project. They have made masks, finger puppets and glove puppets in every class and use diverse tools in their teaching. Cloth Book Holders are mounted on walls in all the classrooms and books are easily accessible for children. Reading aloud sessions have became part of their daily routine.
- The teachers believe that being systematic and specifically programmed is the strength of this project compared to other plans that they had used before. They know the path they should take through a year with children and they know why they perform each and every activity.



Book-related activities in a classroom



Follow up activities for reading
in a class



Children playing with the masks of
book characters



Glove puppets of book characters



Library in Khuzestan

Part two

Project Title	Read with Me library in Gourieh, Khuzestan Province
Implemented by	Read with Me Group affiliated to the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature
Sponsored by	IBBY Children in Crisis Fund
Covered Regions	Gourieh and surrounding villages
Number of promoters	More than 35
Number of librarians	4
Number kindergarten teachers	16
Number of Children	About 500
Start Date	April 2019
Status	Ongoing



Project Summary

Gourieh was selected as another center for project implementation after it was visited by one of the Read with Me team members. This district in Khuzestan province is highly populated and there are 56 villages inside the district, most of them in short of proper facilities for children education. The project focused on training girls and women so they can promote reading among children and young adults in their villages. Setting up a library in this region was one of the first priorities of the project to provide access to quality books for volunteer teachers and promoters.



Project Highlights

- Sending Basic Literacy Packages along with activity sheets and other supplements for teachers and tutors working with children before school age
- Establishing a child-centered library with quality books for children 0-16 years old
- Holding three rounds of workshops for volunteers, teachers and librarians (Basic Literacy Improvement through Literature, Reading Aloud, Children's Literature, Book-related activities and art, Rich Literacy Environment in Libraries)
- Monitoring the project and guiding teachers and librarians for holding read-aloud sessions and doing the follow-up activities
- Visiting the library, at least twice, and helping the librarians and promoters to improve their activities.



First round of workshops – Basic Literacy Improvement through Literature, June 2019



In June 2019, a team of Read with Me trainers held “Basic Literacy Improvement through Literature” workshops for 35 participants, mostly women and girls who work with children under school age. Most people in this part of Iran are bilingual (Arabic, Farsi). The children struggle and have problem with learning Farsi as the second language, before school and at the first years of school. So, “Learning Phonological Awareness Skills” and “Learning Phonemic Awareness Skills” packages help children to learn Persian more easily and more joyfully.

During their stay, the Read with Me trainers also had a meeting with a group of mothers, describing the importance of reading books with children and its effects on child’s lingual and mental growth.



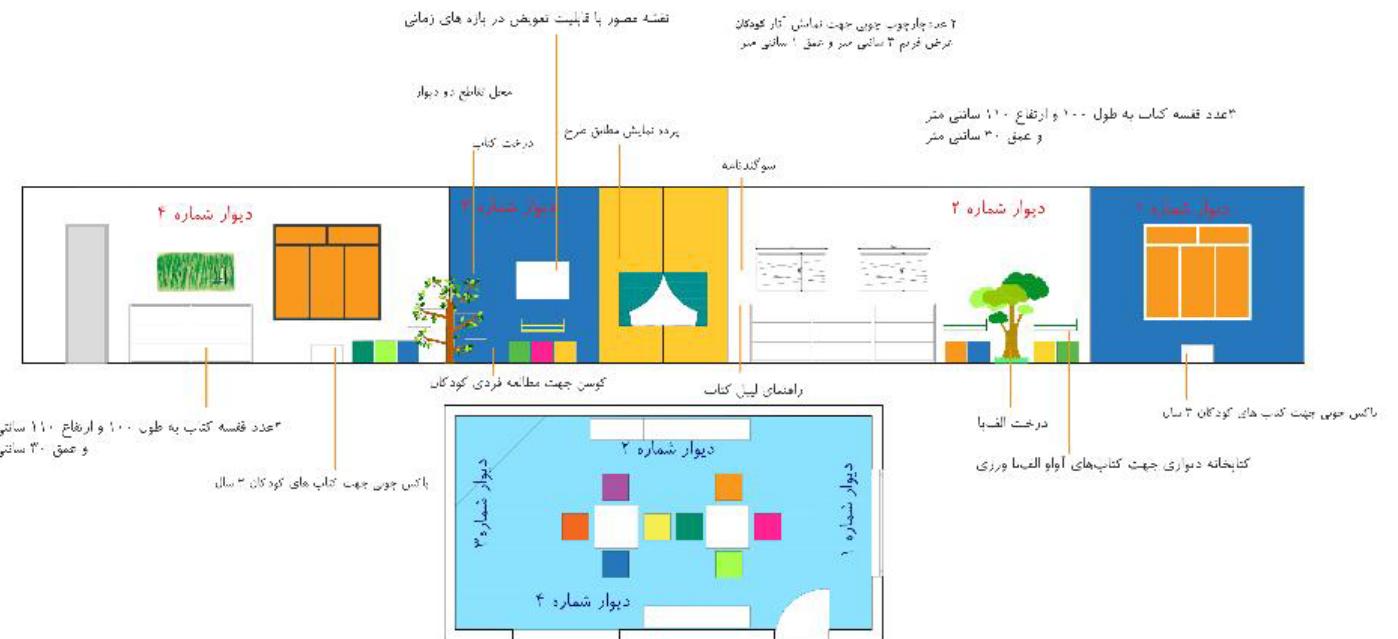
Creating and joining groups on social media to connect with teachers and monitor their activities

The Read with Me experts are connected with teachers and tutors via social media, as well as other regions. They receive reports, pictures and short videos of their activities with children and give them advices to improve their works.



Child-centered library design and sending of quality books and equipment

In September 2019, packages of quality books (around 1200 books), and a set of items used to enrich the library environment were sent to the region. Library equipment was prepared at the place, by help and support of local benefactors.





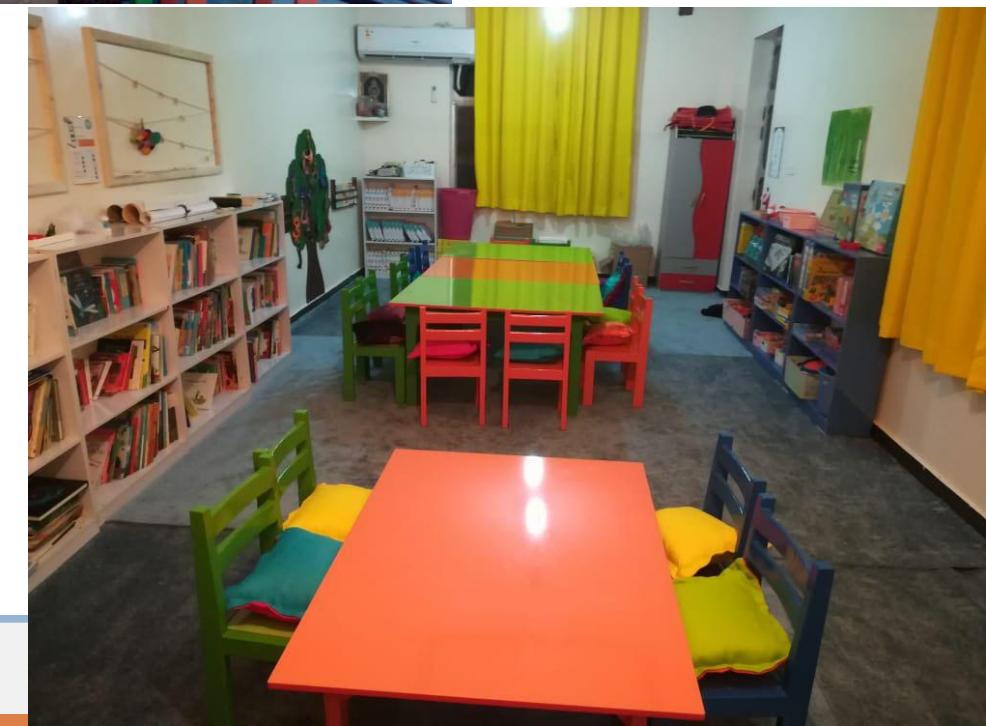
Library establishment and workshops for librarians

In September 2019, another team of Read with Me trainers traveled to Gourieh and held the “Rich Literacy Environment in Libraries” workshop for librarians and a group of interested volunteers.

The library was established with the help of some enthusiastic local people and the librarians learned the basics of working in a children’s library.

Another meeting with mothers was held in this trip, introducing them to quality books of the library and how they can benefit their children with the books and activities provided in the library.

Library services are available also for kindergartens and other child centers near the library and teachers and tutors borrow books from the library to work with children in their own centers.





Third round of workshops – Reading Aloud and Children’s Literature, November 2019



In November 2019, “Reading Aloud and Children’s Literature” workshops along with the “Book-related Crafts and Activities” workshop were held for librarians and local volunteers. Knowing the technics of reading aloud, now these volunteers take library books to their villages and read aloud with children.

During this visit, the librarians received additional training to work with children and maintain the library.

Another short meeting with mothers was held in the library.



Visit to the library and related kindergartens

In February 2020, library and its activities was visited by the Read with Me experts. Five kindergartens in the region, which work in collaboration with the library, were also visited. During these visits, the librarians and tutors read aloud for children and described their book-related activities and the Read with Me experts commented on their works and suggested solutions for their issues regarding books and reading aloud.

Future Tasks



Regarding the Coronavirus outbreak, the scheduled visit to the library for spring 2020, will be postponed. But during this time, Read with Me experts stay connected to the librarians and local volunteers trying to find every possible potential to work during the pandemic. Also after almost one year of the project implementation in this region, the Read with Me team works on project analysis, its outcomes and its challenges in order to perform better when the library will be reopened.



Read-aloud session in the library



Reading aloud in nearby villages



Read-aloud session in a kindergarten



Library in Poldokhtar

Part three

Project Title	Read with Me library in Poldokhtar, Lorestan Province
Implemented by	Read with Me Group affiliated to the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature
Sponsored by	IBBY Children in Crisis Fund
Covered Regions	Poldokhtar
Number of teachers	25 teachers and 3 principals
Number of librarians	1
Number of Children	More than 500
Start Date	October 2019
Status	Ongoing



Project Summary

During the floods in spring 2019 in Iran, the overflow of Kashkan River, inflicted much damage to the western parts of Poldokhtar city, leaving the eastern section intact. Unfortunately, most schools were located in the western part of the city. 19 out of 21 school were damaged and needed total or partial repairs. Following discussions with the Poldokhtar Education Office, an elementary school was introduced to the Read with Me group for implementing the project and establishing a library. This school –located in the eastern section of the city and unharmed during the floods- has about 500 students in two separate shifts (one for girls and one for boys). The child-centered library in this school will operate as the region's reading promotion base, and teachers from other schools, promoters and volunteers can borrow books to read with children where ever they work.



Project Highlights

- Establishing a child-centered library with quality books for students
- Holding three rounds of workshops for teachers and librarians (Reading Aloud, Children's Literature, Book-related activities and art, Rich Literacy Environment in Libraries, Environment and Living Values)
- Monitoring the project and guiding teachers and librarians for holding read-aloud sessions and doing the follow-up activities
- Giving two visits to the library, and helping the librarians and teachers to improve their activities.



First round of workshops – Reading Aloud and Children’s Literature, December 2019



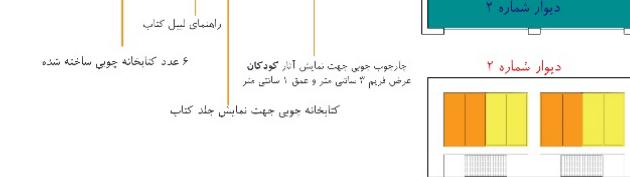
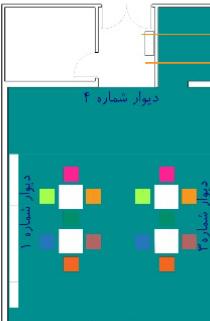
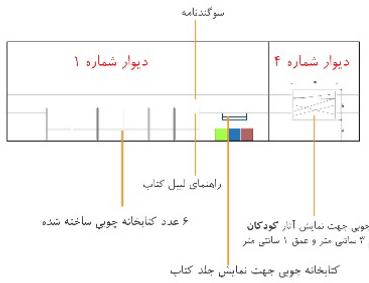
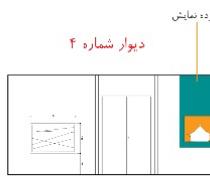
In December 2019, first rounds of workshops including: “Reading Aloud and Children’s Literature” workshops, and “Book-related Activities and Crafts” workshop were held for 28 teachers from 3 schools in the city.

These teachers receive wall-mounted cloth book-holders and install them in their classrooms. They borrow books from the library and make them accessible to children in their classes by putting them in these book holders.



Child-centered library design and sending of quality books and equipment

In December 2019, almost 1000 books (for children 3-16 years old, mostly focusing on elementary school age) along with activity sheets and other supplements for teachers and librarians were sent to this school. A set of items used to enrich the library environment was also included in packages sent to the region





Library establishment and workshops for librarians

Two weeks after the previous workshop, another team from Read with Me traveled to Poldokhtar to hold the “Rich Literacy Environment in Libraries” workshop for librarians and teachers and establishing the library.

A mother, whose child is studying in the school was finally selected to work as the librarian.

The library was established the following day by the Read with Me team with the help of school students.





Future Tasks

Two visits and one workshop, scheduled for March and May 2020, are postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. The project will continue when the schools are reopened.



Read-aloud session in the library



All children have the right to read quality books

