We have all been living in a coronavirus pandemic for months. Kindergartens, schools and libraries were closed, so Read with Me had to transform its activities. The consequences of this pandemic were unfortunate for children as it kept them away from education, books, friendship, and conversations. These adverse circumstances are two times worse for deprived and underserved children. Therefore, the Read with Me team sought new ways to accompany children in these harsh times.
Since the beginning of the pandemic, Read with Me provided educational content to teach children and families about coronavirus and how to prevent its spread. The content included dubbing two animations and translating and publishing two e-books for children.

https://amoozak.org/py7xl

Books translated to Farsi
Animations dubbed to Farsi

Introduction to Coronavirus by Tim and Moby
https://amoozak.org/hb9pg

What is Coronavirus? The Dr. Binocs Show
https://amoozak.org/8q1nk
The first few weeks of the pandemic coincided with the Persian New Year. At this point, Read with Me team translated COVID-19 Time Capsule by LONG Creations and distributed it among children to encourage them to write down this chapter of their lives and to help them express and understand their fears, worries and emotions.

https://amoozak.org/6j3ed
To accompany children and their families even further, online read-aloud sessions were posted on Read with Me Instagram pages: @iranak_org and @koodaki_org. Currently, more than 80 audio files are available in Iranak Childhood Museum Instagram.
Families and teachers also needed guidance during these times so that they could protect children and themselves from the virus as well as learn ways to educate children and keep them entertained. Therefore, more than 10 educational papers around these topics were translated and published in amoozak.org website.

https://amoozak.org/term/5529-کودکان-ویروس-کرونا-29
Recently Read with Me has launched the “Read with Me at Home Campaign”. Teachers and families are advised to stay at home and share their read-aloud and activity videos through the hashtags: #.Read_with_Me_at_home and #.Read_aloud_at_home

A lot of families have participated since the beginning of the campaign and a lot of their videos have been posted on Read with Me social media.
#در_خانه_پا_من_بخوان
#Read_with_Me_at_home
Read with Me librarians and teachers in Tehran, Isfahan, South Khorasan, Sistan and Balouchestan, Lorestan, Hormozgan and other provinces have been seeking ways to keep their connection with children. Each have come up with their own creative ways regarding their unique circumstances and facilities.

Read-aloud session for nomadic children of Noghab, South Khorasan province
May 2020
Those who have access to internet, resort to online teaching. They read-aloud books, record their voice or film their session, send them to children and ask for their cooperation. Children participate enthusiastically and send messages to their teachers, sing songs and send pictures and videos of their drawings.
The teachers and librarians who do not have access to internet, or are based in libraries that are far from children’s homes, fill their backpacks or cars with books and visit children to lend them books. Some travel from door to door and hold read-aloud sessions outside children’s homes.
Some promoters travel to the nomadic peoples to read-aloud to children and women before the migration season.
During the yellow level emergency condition, promoters hold read-aloud sessions in parks while considering health and safety protocols.
Promoter Activities

Some hold read-aloud sessions outdoors and encourage children to do follow-up activities.

Halimeh Gorg, Read with Me promoter in Bonjar, Sistan and Balouchestan Province
Some visit their library members on weekends with their book backpacks on their shoulders. They lend books to children and their families with health considerations.

Promoter Activities

Farhan Hamdi, Read with Me promoter in Khouzestan Province
Or turn their cars into mobile libraries.

Zeynab Shoja’eddini, Read with Me promoter in Kerman Province
Diligent teenagers of nomadic communities have been part of the Read with Me “Book Backpacks” project for 3 years. They have been continuing this endeavor during the pandemic. One of the teenagers takes books to the nomadic tents where his friends live. Another one has hung a Read with Me Book Display in a store in a village and lends books to children of the village as well as those who have migrated to the nearby mountains.
Promoter Activities
جیرفت، استان کرمان
Many libraries, especially those in deprived areas, restarted their activities while in yellow and orange levels of emergency. The Read with Me team published an instruction according to the regions’ conditions and emergency levels. The team held several meetings to come up with procedures that could make the libraries active again.

These instructions are all available in Read with Me website: khanak.org/fa

Since December 2020, Read with Me librarians have been holding monthly meetings with the purpose of connecting Read with Me libraries across the country and providing a robust channel to share experiences in.
Many Librarians open the library at set times during the week to lend books to children.
Laleh Library, Jiroft, Kerman Province
Basic Literacy Education
Library Activities

Jiroft, Kerman

Rijab Read with Me Library
Dalahou, Kermanshah

Etrat Read with Me Library
Zabol, Sistan and Balouchestan
Azarestan Construction Co. Factory Library continues its activities with its unique procedure. The workers of the factory borrow books and other cultural products to take to their families. All books, films and toys are disinfected before being put on shelves. The online platform of the library also accompanies enthusiastic families.
A lot of educational centers as well as libraries tried to keep children’s connection with books and education in small groups and with health protocols.
Abdolrahman School, Haji Abdollah Village, Bonjar, Sistan and Balouchestan
Alinaghi School, Siachik Village, Sistan and Balouchestan
فعالیت‌های مهدها مدرسه‌ها

Mehr Afagh Preschool, Doroud, Lorestan

Arbab Village, Bonjar, Sistan and Balouchestan
In Mehr-o-Mah Empowerment Center, in addition to online activities for preschoolers, the center celebrated World Peace Day with the presence of children and with health considerations.
Due to children’s lack of access to smartphones, Nedaye Mandegar Empowerment Center decided to teach preschoolers in person. Since November 2020, students participate in classes three times a week. Each session is held for 6 students and takes one hour.
And through all this time, we never forgot about establishing libraries. Within the last year, Read with Me promoters and experts have established 8 libraries with health considerations:

- Ravansar Library – Kermanshah Province
- Zalaan Library – Kermanshah Province
- Ava Library – Islamshahr, Tehran Province
- Komite Villages Library – Tehran Province
- Sabashahr Library – Tehran Province
- Mahtab Library – Chaikhansar, Gilan Province
- Valiasr School Library – Khansar, Isfahan Province
- Yare Mehraban Library – Arak, Markazi Province

These libraries cannot wait until the pandemic over so that they can host children and not just lend books.
Establishing Libraries
Read with Me Fan Club financially supported the provision of a portion of the books at Parandeh Library in Panjshir, Afghanistan as well as training its librarians and promoters. Part of the activities of Prandeh Library will be allocated to the Read with Me program.
New libraries needed training librarians. Since holding workshops in person was impossible and teaching through social media and messaging apps would not have the same quality, we had to think of effective ways to teach: designing our own online platform. That’s why we created the “Children’s Literature and Read-aloud” Online Course in the “Read with Me Online Education Platform”. Each course has asynchronous sessions which are available to the participants. The participants have unlimited access to the material.
This method of teaching had advantages over in-person workshops as well. The workshops used to be intensive, taking up to two days. But now, each group of participants is engaged in learning throughout a three-week window. They can learn a richer content with a flexible schedule.
Reading in Families is the latest project of the Institute for Research on the History of Children’s Literature within the Read with Me program which started from the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.

Now that schools and kindergartens are closed, children’s education depends on families on the one hand, and the online world on the other. The lives of children in underserved regions, and with illiterate parents has been affected the most. Therefore, empowering parents to be able to help their children learn literacy became a priority.
In this project, depending on the literacy level of parents and their children’s age group, certain books are given to families. Educational sessions will be held to instruct families further. In addition to the educational sessions, the Read with Me team has provided a guidebook for families to help them share books with children.
Asmaa, a teenage girl in Bonjar, Sistan and Balouchestan, reads aloud to her younger brothers and grandmother.
Families in Nedaye Mandegar Empowerment Center joined the project. Fathers have been very cooperative.
Reading in Families project in Mehr-o-Mah Empowerment Center revolves around basic literacy creative education.
Basic Literacy Creative Education for out of school children is another priority for the Read with Me team. In this education method, Basic Literacy packages and appropriate quality books are delivered to children and various workshops are held for their teachers to train them in basic literacy teaching and read-aloud techniques and follow-up activities. Educating out of school children continues stronger than ever during the pandemic.
Teaching out of school children in Shirabad, Zahedan had started from 2019. This project proceeded in 2020 for more than 315 children in 1st and 2nd grade. These children are taught within small groups and with health consideration. The lack of Access to sanitary products, clean water and appropriate sewerage in this district means that children’s presence in school could be an overall healthier option.
Additionally, the education of about 350 children in preschool, 1st grade, 2nd grade and two literacy classes for older children, is covered by Read with Me through the Basic Literacy Creative Education program. These children are supported by the Child Labor Association at 4 centers in Tehran and 1 center in Bam.
Books have been delivered to all 665 children covered by this program. Their teachers have also participated in Read with Me Online Courses and in-person workshops. The team has prepared Emergent Literacy Evaluation Forms to monitor children’s progress in literacy with a research-based outlook.
Difficult days are ahead of us. We do not know for certain how future will unfold. However, it is clear that children need our attention. It is clear that we will not give up. We will strive forward with knowledge and a realistic mindset. We will think of novel ways to go forth.