READ WITH ME LIBRARIES IN 2020

Report Date:
March 2021
COVID-19 pandemic and other social and economic factors made 2020 much different than what we had planned and expected. During this challenging year, all Read with Me colleagues including experts, librarians, promoters, and financial supporters tried to keep children in touch with the world of books. In 2020, the type and amount of library activities changed but never stopped. This year, we still established new libraries, children still had access to books, the Read with Me librarian network was strengthened and together, we made the effort to keep the light of hope in our hearts.
LIBRARY ACTIVITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Part 1.
It has been more than one year since the first coronavirus patient has been confirmed. During all this time, all jobs and activities were affected by the pandemic. Coronavirus has transformed children’s experience in playing, school, socializing and so on. Across the world, lots of children’s libraries which were once places for children to gather, were closed or limited. In Iran, Read with Me libraries had the same condition.
Since last March, Read with Me libraries have found different procedures for their activities. Some were completely closed and others continued their activities more or less. Since the beginnings of Winter 2021, a number of libraries were reopened with health protocols and considerations. On the following pages, you can see the activities of Read with Me libraries in different regions and the Read with Me team who scheduled and supported the libraries in the first year of COVID-19 pandemic.
Unfortunately, most school libraries were closed this year. A total of 20 Read with Me libraries including school libraries and some village/local libraries which were located at high-risk regions ended up being closed. The librarians of these libraries could not continue their activities outside of the library due to restrictions.
However, among these, there were some libraries that were closed but the librarians somehow continued working with children either through online platforms or by delivering books at their doors or even through arranging meetings outdoors. These librarians recorded their read-aloud sessions and sent them to online groups they had on Telegram, Whatsapp or Instagram. Some others packaged books appropriate to children’s age-group sand lent them to fatheir milies for a longer period of time. Some also held read-aloud sessions outdoors with parents’ consent.

9 Read with Me libraries in Lorestan, Rey, Hormozgan, Poldokhtar, Sarpol-e Zahab, Qeshm and Sistan & Balouchestan continued their activities this way.
Javanroud Read with Me Library in Kermanshah – Online Activities

- From left to right:
  - Creating a poll to ask children about the book they want for their read-aloud session
  - Children sending their artwork in the group
  - Sending audiobooks to the group
Online read-aloud session in Dargahan, Qeshm Island

“After the online read-aloud, children made crafts and shared the pictures in our group”
Read-aloud session outdoors, Sirkouh Village, Kermanshah
Promoter: Maryam Kahrizi
Home libraries – Sarpol-e Zahab – Kermanshah
Librarian: Shokoufeh Amirian
Jar Elementary School Library, Haj Abdollah Village – Sistan and Balouchestan
Book packages ready to be delivered to families – Anahita Library - Tehran
Delivering book sacks to a number of students in HosseinAbad and GhassemAbad Villages – Zabol – Sistan and Balouchestan
Meanwhile, there were some libraries that were able to keep their doors open, although their activities were limited to lending books. Their work hours were decreased and while they were open, children could enter the library, search through the books. 20 libraries in Kermanshah, Lorestan, South Khorasan, some districts of Tehran and Sistan & Balouchestan continued their activities like this.
Lending books to children – Valiasr School Library – Khansar - Isfahan
There were also libraries that due to their local situation, remained open and continued their activities as they always had. 15 libraries had this condition. They were mostly small village libraries that maintained a sort of village-wide quarantine and the population was able to keep safe from the pandemic. These libraries are located in Hormozgan, Gilan, Kerman, Charmahal and Bakhtiari, and Sistan & Balouchestan.
Lending books to children and read-aloud sessions in Radochahi village
Teenage Librarian: Asmaa Ghanbarzehi
Lending books to children and read-aloud session – Ghargharouk Village – Sistan & Balouchestan
This library has 6 teenage librarians
The Read with Me Library Support Team in Tehran, continued their activities as of previous years. In addition to their normal responsibilities, they also helped librarians and promoters in implementing the health protocols.

For better coordination and clarity during the pandemic, two announcements were made on May 20th and November 11th 2020. In these announcements, necessary instructions and guides about library activities during the pandemic were specified.

Also, the financial supporters of our libraries and Read with Me Fan Club provided face masks and disinfectants for libraries that demanded them, so as to enhance the safety of the libraries for children.
The Library Support team also published “The Safety and Health Handbook” and “The Safety and Health Checklist” for Read with Me libraries.

According to the checklists we received from our libraries, we evaluated their safety and health situation and made follow-up decisions.
In 2020, a group of Read with Me experts started working on the Read with Me Online Courses on Amouzak Online Education Platform. This platform allowed us to continue holding Read with Me workshops online, since they were stopped last year due to the pandemic.

Our newly established libraries and new librarians were trained through this platform. Some older librarians also participated in the “Children’s Literature and Read-aloud” workshop to solidify their previous learnings.
ESTABLISHING NEW LIBRARIES

Part 2.
A Read with Me Library is a collection of standards that can be implemented in any library, creating a space appropriate for children. A Read with Me library is a child-centered space with a literacy-rich environment.

For more information about our libraries, visit our Read with Me Libraries webpage.

In 2020, 12 libraries were added to our family, reaching a total of 81 Read with Me libraries.
Zalan Read with Me Library
Location: Zalan Village, Kermanshah
Start Date: May 2020
Supporter: Read with Me Fan Club and Keep Children in School Foundation
Sabashahr Read with Me Library
Location: Sabashahr, Tehran
Start Date: June 2020
Supporter: Arg Telecommunication Co.
Yar-e Mehrban Read with Me Library
Location: Arak (Rezvan School), Markazi
Start Date: September 2020
Supporter: Ms. Kasraee
Mahtab Read with Me Library
Location: Chaikhansar Village, Gilan
Start Date: October 2020
Supporter: Ghavvami Family
Komiteh Read with Me Library
Location: Komiteh Village, Tehran
Start Date: October 2020
Supporter: Bahrehmand Family
Niyayesh Read with Me Library
Location: Ravansar, Kermanshah
Start Date: November 2020
Supporter: In memory of Mehdi Amiri, supported by a relative
Roja Read with Me Library
Location: Koveyi Village, Hormozgan
Start Date: November
Supporter: Roja Center
Sorayya Read with Me Library
Location: Qazvin
Start Date: January 2021
Supporter: Sorayya Qezelayaq fans and Read with Me Fan Club
Tiab Girls Read with Me Library
Location: Konarak, Sistan & Balouchestan
Start Date: March 2021
Supporters: Idaj Engineering Co. and Balin Tech.
Golbanou Read with Me Library
Location: Bayangan, Kermanshah
Start Date: March 2021
Supporter: Mr. Kianpour, Shamlo Family, Mr. Vaziri
Jahantiq Read with Me Library
Location: Piri Village – Sistan and Balouchestan
Start Date: March 2021
Supporter: Sima Behmanesh
Roya Read with Me Library
Location: Kul Village, Zabol, Sistan and Balouchestan
Start Date: March 2021
Supporters: Farzan Rad Co. and Sima Behmanesh
Mafi Library, built in memory of Yahya Mafi in his hometown, had been closed for some time. It was reopened in February 2021, with support from Mafi Family and the cooperation of Qazvin Education Office.
Tabas Masina Read with Me Library, which was previously located in Bahonar Elementary School, was closed along with school during the pandemic. However, in January 2021, it restarted its activities at a new location.
MONTHLY MEETINGS OF LIBRARIANS

Part 3.
Read with Me Libraries team arranged monthly online meetings with all Read with Me Librarians to strengthen the network of librarians within the program. Each monthly session has a main topic around which librarians share their experiences with their colleagues across the country. In addition to that, the latest news and focal subjects of the Read with Me program are also announce in each session.

In 2020, a total of 4 monthly meetings were held. The topics of these meetings included: “Library activities during COVID-19 pandemic”, “Health and safety in the library”, “cooperation of children and teenagers in library management”, and “environmental activities in a library”. These meetings had 25 participants from Sistan and Balouchestan, Hormozgan, Kerman, Tehran, Kermanshah, Kordestan, Qazvin, Gilan and Lorestan Provinces.
The Reading in Families program is a new project by Read with Me which started implementation in Autumn 2020. The main goal of this program is to empower families (parents) in underserved regions, so that they can promote basic literacy through literature and reading books to their children (from 0 to 16 years of age). The most practical and realistic places that can help implement this program are libraries. Due to their constant contact with children, naturally they are involved with families as well. The library is also a great location for holding sessions. Therefore, librarians can easily hold meetings with parents, whenever they see fit, so they can talk to them about the importance of reading books and emergent literacy. They can also teach parents how to share books with their children so they can read to their children at home.
Zalan Library – Reading in Families program
Rijab Library – Reading in Families program
Javanroud Library – Reading in Families program
Moallem Kalayeh Library – Reading in Families program
• Designing and implementing an online workshop about “How to create a literacy-rich environment” for librarians, teachers and parents

• Improving the safety and health conditions of Read with Me libraries

• Expanding the network of Read with Me libraries and enhancing the necessary foundations for online communication

• Complementary training for librarians through online workshops
Lorestan Nomads Library, Khorram Abad

Javanroud Library, Kermanshah

Salas Library, Kermanshah

Rijab Library, Kermanshah

Lorestan Nomads Library, Khorram Abad