No doubt that 2020 is proving to be a challenging year. As we all have been told, challenges can also bring unexpected opportunities. Many of us have been given the opportunity to reinvent how our children are taught and how day to day interactions are conducted. Solutions are not as straight forward for those lacking basic resources. The issues impacting under-served communities can be very daunting and are not unique to any one community or country. It is not surprising that our grant recipients are finding similar challenges and are having to find new ways to complete their missions.

Alaa Qaraarha Youth Programs Coordinator and Fall 2019 AllPeopleBeHappy Fellow with Collateral Repair Project

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on daily life. The first cases of coronavirus in Jordan were reported in early March, and the government rapidly put the entire country into lock-down… Whilst government measures have been largely successful in controlling the virus, the effect on refugee and low-income Jordanian
months to come… The closure of schools is also putting additional financial pressure on families who now need to provide lunches and snacks for their children where this was previously provided for at school… Although the doors to the community centers are closed, the Youth Team and our volunteers are working from home to reach out and support families in the community. I began by conducting extensive outreach to understand this new situation, and how the lock-down is affecting families and their children’s development. I found that, although parents are concerned about their children’s education, they are struggling with ideas for activities which are appropriate to the age and level of their child - especially in homes with multiple children who all need different kinds of support.

In response to this need, one of our biggest successes this quarter is that we have managed to adapt the After-School Club program into a curriculum of home-based activities which is accessible to families in their homes. Initially we began to send out ideas for individual activities for parents to do with their children, and that has now evolved into a full schedule of games, learning exercises and other activities designed to support academic and personal development. The schedule is sent out every week to parents, along with supporting materials/resources. For example, one of our volunteers recorded a class on how to draw a human hand, including a step-by-step activity that the children could do themselves. As with many of our activities, parents responded to the Youth Team by sending us pictures of their children, or even the whole family, doing that activity together.

During my outreach, I also found that many parents wanted their children to access the government’s educational program, “Darsak”. This is an online program and series of TV broadcasts introduced during lockdown which follows the school curriculum. Many parents reached out to me, asking for help to access the online platform and in understanding how to use the resources. I am working one on one with these parents to ensure they can log in to the site, and I am also providing a daily schedule to help parents structure the lessons on the platform.

I would like to thank the AllPeopleBeHappy foundation for supporting me and the community I serve here in Amman. Although these are difficult times, it’s so important that children from vulnerable families are not forgotten and left to fall behind their peers.”