



HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program

CANADA UPDATE FALL 2010

What is the HiMaT Project?

The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Project was born in 2009 out of several years of pilot efforts in Pakistan and elsewhere, informed by lessons learned from poverty alleviation efforts around the world, and given legs through a new partnership between an indigenous NGO in northern Pakistan (Karakorum Area Development Organization—KADO) and groups from Europe (HiMaT Grassroots Development Foundation—HGDF) and Canada (Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning).

The project was launched with the goal of establishing a *prototype training and support centre* that would work with indigenous institutions, leaders, and communities to *build capacity for sustainable human wellbeing and prosperity*.

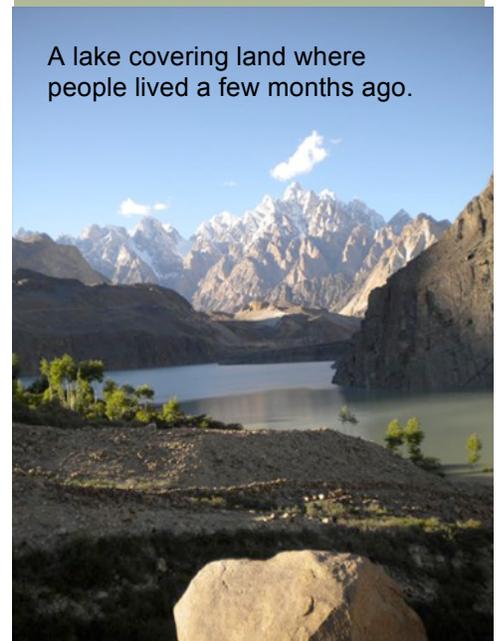
Four Goals of the Project

1. **Vision and Spirit** – developing a vision of possibility, and the spirit of hope, enterprise and community service.
2. **Governance Development** – supporting the emergence and strengthening of local and area governance mechanisms, full community participation in development decision making, and leadership capable of facilitating and guiding the implementation of comprehensive community development plans.
3. **Capacity Building** – promoting the learning that is needed at the level of individuals, organizations and communities to support the realization of development goals. Learning strategies include formal training, ongoing coaching and mentoring and periodic participatory evaluation processes.
4. **Supporting Sustainable Social and Economic Progress** – the encouragement and support of many small and medium sized social and economic initiatives aimed at improvement in the quality of life, as well as supporting the emergence of institutional support mechanisms, including micro-credit and micro-credit insurance programs, public utilities initiatives and the emergence of community development promoting institutions that are owned and operated by grassroots people.

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A lake covering land where people lived a few months ago.





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Our Story

During the founding meetings of the HiMaT project in November 2009, work plans were made calling for detailed community development planning at the cluster level and the selection of 100 community leaders (men, women, youth, elders, members of institutions and households) to be the first cohort of those trained in the core program of the HiMaT Institute. Plans for curriculum development were also made and our team actively began working toward a spring 2010 launch of institute courses and projects.

The project began work with a pilot cluster of 11 villages in the remote Chipursan Valley, which hugs the Afghan and China borders at the very northern tip of Gilgit-Baltistan. Two additional clusters have since been added, bringing the total number of villages engaged in the project to 34.

Each village has a village council and a women's council. Each cluster of villages has an area institution called a local support

organization (LSO) focused on promoting the development of the communities connected to it.

HiMaT supports activities in collaboration with these three clusters, funds the staff and operating costs of one, and supports three professional field workers who travel from Hunza/Aliabad regularly to provide coaching and mentoring support to collaborating clusters.

We eventually plan to work with 10-12 clusters in the Hunza region and to extend our work into areas now experiencing extremist activity. *Our vision is that by supporting positive development, communities will have a real alternative to violence.*

Those were our plans, but then disaster struck. First, on January 4, 2010 a huge landslide (2 km wide, 3 km long and 600 m deep) completely cut-off the Gojal Valley, separating upper Hunza from lower Hunza. The Chipursan Valley, our initial pilot site, was virtually cut off for many weeks after the landslide. The Chipursan people were unable to travel to Karimabad, where our

The Hunza Landslide

January 4, 2010 is a day that forever changed the geography of northern Pakistan. A massive landslide that day swept away the village of Attabad in Gilgit-Baltistan Province, destroying 26 homes and killing 20 people. The landslide completely blocked the Hunza River, and as a result, a large lake formed behind this dam. The Attabad Gojal Lake, as it has come to be known, is currently more than 20 kilometers long and over 300 feet deep.

About 20,000 people have been displaced due to the flooding and an additional 25,000 people were stranded from land transportation routes to markets, hospitals, schools and other necessities. As of the middle of June, 242 homes, 135 shops, four hotels, two schools, four factories and hundreds of acres of agricultural land had been flooded. As well, 25 kilometers of the Karakoram Highway, the only land route from Pakistan's capital Islamabad to the northern parts of the country, were covered by water and 6 bridges had been swept away.





Our Story, continued

The Seed and Fertilizer Crisis

The January 4, 2010 landslide resulted in a crisis for the people north of the Attabad Gojal Lake. If they could not gain access to fertilizer and seeds to plant their crops by mid-April, 25,000 people risk acute food shortages and poverty. These families were already suffering as a result of a poor potato harvest in 2009. Potatoes are their primary cash crop. Now, with fuel and agricultural input costs skyrocketing due to the landslide and the physical barriers involved in moving seeds and fertilizer past the landslide, farmers were in a drastic situation. Affected communities asked for help from the Pakistani Government, large international NGOs and the UN. No one was able to respond in time.

HiMaT, with the help of some generous international and Pakistani businessmen, managed to raise \$75,000 to purchase needed seeds and fertilizer, and to find a way to get them to the farmers, despite tremendous physical obstacles. It is important to note that the seeds and fertilizer were given to farmers as micro-loans that were guaranteed by their own area and local development institutions. Thus, even in the midst of disaster, HiMaT continued to promote self reliance. This program was organized within a very short, but critical window of time allowing farmers to get their crops in. Wheat, vegetable and pulse seeds, and fertilizer were purchased in bulk and then moved into the affected area through the support of some 300 volunteers. These volunteers had to carry 50 kg bags over bridges that could not support a loaded truck and load them on and off transport many (including boats) many times to reach the most needy communities.



Project office is located (about 9 kilometers south of the new Attabad Gojal Lake). They faced rapidly escalating costs for the goods they could access in Sost, the primary market centre north of Karimabad. For some months, goods were very difficult to find, because the high mountain pass between Pakistan and China, the only other source for consumer products, is closed during the winter months.

As spring approaches, they faced another serious crisis. If they were not able to buy seeds to plant their year's crops, they would not have food to carry them through the next fall and winter and no cash crops, the only source of income for most families.

Just as the people of Chipursan were stranded in the North, the HiMaT field staff was also unable to travel to support them. Furthermore, basic communication services in the Karimabad area were unreliable for many months, making it difficult for us in Canada to keep in touch with our Pakistani colleagues.

From Development to Disaster

There was no possible way for a community responsive indigenous NGO working in a disaster zone to pretend that it was all "business as usual". All of our field staff come from the villages in the affected area. Their families and friends were impacted and their households in Aliabad/Hunza—the district urban centre—were filled with refugees. Our team was conscripted to everyday relief work: getting shelter, food, fresh water, medicine and other basic survival needs to the thousands of suddenly homeless people in the valley. Our plan for promoting sustainable development activities has to be put on the back burner.

But that did not mean our program team wasn't deeply involved with our project communities. The story on this page illustrates just how flexible and nimble HiMaT proved to be in combining disaster response with ongoing capacity development.



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Our Story, continued

By July 2010, the Gojal disaster was beginning to stabilize. Large international disaster relief and recovery dollars were promised. Plans were developed (without consulting local community leaders and institutions) and response activities began.

The Second Shock

In July of 2010 project partners developed a new work plan aimed at putting the HiMaT project back on its original course. In August of 2010, Pakistan experienced the worst flood disaster in the country's history, a disaster that the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called "the worst disaster in the history of the United Nations".

The heavy rains that caused the floods first impacted the northern high mountain region. For at least three weeks, Hunza was cut-off from the world—an island in the midst of a vast inland sea that eventually flowed downhill and left millions of households and thousands of communities in southern Pakistan devastated and vagrant.

Again our project area was entirely cut-off. This time there was no road access at all from the north to the capital, Islamabad. Electricity, phone and Internet were out for three weeks. We had to postpone a scheduled field visit set for the end of September. And, to make matters even worse for the people of Gojal, the promised disaster recovery money was withdrawn.



What Now?

These two disasters have turned our project area from one where 70% of households were ranked as "poor" or "ultra poor" to one in which the entire population has been devastated, the local economy has been destroyed, and almost all households are ultra poor and struggling to help others that are even worse off than they are.



This November we will again try to launch our HiMaT area training and support centre, (which is partially operational now). Our goal will be to begin training programs during our fall visit and continue them in the spring.

The opportunity has never been greater to build the strength of local leaders and local institutions and for using the shared problem of disaster recovery as a focal point for continuous improvement in community capacity for sustainable development.

Creating Quick Wins with Small Awards



During our November 2009 field visit, we received a wonderful telephone call from a Canadian friend offering \$2,500 to be used “to encourage the people of Chipursan Valley”. After some thoughtful consultation with our team, we decided to run a contest. The rules of the Project were as follows.

Each of the 11 villages would receive three awards of 5,000 Pakistan Rupees (about \$60) for the best micro-project proposal submitted by a man’s group, a woman’s group and youth group. We announced the contest at the end of a community planning process in the Chipursan Valley. The criteria for selection, we explained, would be those projects, which: a) provided a needed improvement to community life, and b) were carried out by a small group of at least three community members working together.



The response was immediate and enthusiastic and many excellent proposals were received. 28 projects were given the small stimulus award: 8 men’s groups, 10 women’s groups and 10 youth groups. Following are examples of the kinds of projects that were undertaken.

- Construction of a boundary wall for a community orchard
- Development of a wood lot to increase availability of fuel for cooking and heating houses
- Community education cooperatives to support parents in covering children’s school fees
- Repair of polo-grounds to support the renewal of a community cultural festival
- Quilt and mattress making to provide products every households need and use
- Construction of a cricket grounds to provide valley youth the opportunity for healthy activity
- Academic tutoring classes during deep winter closures to support successful educational outcomes
- A book bank to provide text books to students on a refundable basis
- Construction of an irrigation water collection tank
- The revitalization and reactivation of the local library to provide students with a study space and the community with access to reading materials
- Repair of a domestic drinking water pipe line benefiting 100% of houses in that community
- Women’s tailoring classes to improve income generation potential
- Widening and repairing irrigation channels for opening new barren land to agriculture
- Repair of link roads, thus opening up a whole side of the village





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Creating Quick Wins with Small Awards, continued

Of 33 projects that were initiated, 29 were successfully completed, and the other 4 are now being resumed and completed with a little encouragement from our field workers.

In most cases, the 5,000 Rupee awards were merely a stimulus and did not even begin to cover the real costs of the projects. Participants raised money from their communities, recruited volunteer labour, and worked very hard to accomplish their goals.

We are now consulting with the Chipursan LSO to select the best project in each category (women, men, youth) and they will receive an additional 10,000 Rupee award, to be used toward a future project.

The Next Phase

The astonishing amount of voluntary community activity generated by the small stimulus awards we offered has led us to announce a second contest, in which groups will receive 10,000 Rupees (twice the previous award) and the three winners will receive an additional 20,000 Rupees. This second award is made possible through the generous contribution of the same anonymous donor who supported the first contest.

Introducing the HiMaT Field Team



Didar Ali

Ashraf Karim



Muhammad Panah

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Disaster Relief and Sustainable Development: An Uneasy but Necessary Partnership



When major disasters such as the Haiti earthquake or the recent Pakistan floods strike, the world, the victims and effected communities are turned completely upside down.

But so are the ongoing processes of constructive development through which communities and families were hard at work striving to achieve self-reliance, sustainable wellbeing and prosperity. Recovery is a very big word, and it covers a wide range of stages.

Phase One: Emergency Relief

The primary goals are getting people to safety and providing what they need to meet basic minimum requirements for survival: food, clean water, shelter, medical treatments and medicines, etc. This emergency stage can last anywhere from a few day to many months.

Phase Two: Transition Relief & Temporary Living

This stage can last from 3-4 months to 3-4 years. It focuses on putting support systems in place that will ensure “human security” for as long as it takes until people can be relocated, either back to their home communities or to some other permanent location where they will be able to live and rebuild their lives.

By “human security” is meant all the requirements for human wellbeing (food, clean water; sanitation; health services; children’s education; income generation; freedom from violence, intimidation and abuse; freedom to practice one’s own religion and observe important cultural practices; having a voice and making decisions about things that affect them (i.e., good governance); and having a justice and redress system.

Since “development” is fundamentally capacity building, it is very possible to develop human and institutional capacity during the time people are still living in temporary communities or camps that will not only improve their quality of life here and now, but will also provide a solid foundation for the rebuilding stage to follow. Important contributions that can be made at this stage are support of recovery from trauma, and education and training oriented to sustainable resilience and both social and economic development.

Phase Three: Reconstruction

This phase focuses on rebuilding lives, infrastructure, the means for livelihood, and community life. A well-executed transition plan (in phase two) would see systems developed and operationalized during the temporary community or camp period (such as education services, health services, waste management, micro-lending schemes and livelihood activities, community governance systems, etc.) transferred back from temporary communities into the permanent community setting, thus contributing to the development of the “software” of a much stronger community than the one that was initially hit by the disaster.



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How Emergency Response Overwhelms Constructive Processes of Development, continued

When the eyes of the world turn toward a Haiti earthquake or a Pakistan flood and begin to mobilize millions of dollars in resources, the focus of most agencies and donors is on Phase One – Emergency Response. Gradually it shifts to *some aspects* of Phase Two, but much of the “softer stuff” such as basic education, the development of community decision-making and governance systems in the camps, livelihood projects, trauma recovery, etc. are not usually very effectively addressed. In this phase, the smaller NGOs are often pushed aside and not even given a chance to be part of the process. It becomes a game of power, in which the “big boys” make the rules. Expectations of “free” handouts overwhelm grassroots efforts to engage impacted communities in self-reliant development activities. Local institutions are ignored and their knowledge, experience and vision for recovery overridden by the large players who have no real connection to the ground, and cannot even imagine what truly self-reliant and sustainable development would look like in any particular local context. And so a huge opportunity to grow the capacity of local and area leaders and institutions is missed (as local institutions and development leaders are by-passed), undermining the community’s capacity for long-range sustainable recovery.

The Opportunity in Disaster Response

Right now (September 2010) in Pakistan there are some 10 million people that are homeless and internally displaced, 4 million of whom are children. Another 10 million have been seriously impacted by a partial or total collapse of local farming systems and economies. Certainly, a massive emergency relief effort is needed to meet the basic requirements of survival. But mere survival is not enough. *Parallel to, and embedded within emergency relief, processes of constructive development need to begin. A massive education, and community development campaign is needed to inspire vision, to ignite the spirit of hope, and to develop human capacity for sustainable development.*

Real social and economic development initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of the people can be undertaken immediately. There is no use in waiting until the transition period is over. What the people have the most of during this transition period is time, as well as many unmet needs. Collective self-help efforts can be extremely effective both in improving the spirit and morale of communities, and in transforming the material conditions and improving the overall quality of life. By engendering the spirit of hope and enterprise in the midst of crisis and loss, huge gains can be made in moving beyond passivity and dependency thinking that tends to be reinforced by the handout climate created by relief operations.

Conclusion

Disaster response presents a very important opportunity to make real progress in building human and community capacity for self-reliance and sustainable wellbeing and prosperity, if processes of constructive engagement are woven into the fabric of relief and reconstruction efforts. For such initiatives to be effective, they need to be guided by organizations that are oriented to and experienced in facilitating capacity building for self-reliant social and economic development, and implemented by organizations that are committed to working with affected populations for at least a 10-year horizon; i.e., through all the phases and stages of recovery from emergency relief through transition and reconstruction and into the “new normal”. And for all of this to happen there has to be adequate funding for the guiding and implementing organizations.

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Picture Gallery



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Canadian Financial Report

Please Note: The HiMaT Project does not use professional fundraisers and 100% of the money we receive goes directly to Project costs. We ourselves are currently working on a volunteer basis. If you are interested in learning more and getting involved in any way, please feel free to contact us at the address below.

Revenue

Alberta donors	30,693.00
Alberta Government Community Spirit Matching Grant	<u>25,000.00</u>
	55,693.00

Expenses

Chipursan Small Awards Project	2,500.00
Field workers (3) salaries and expenses	19,094.92
Travel costs for Canadian technical support	9,242.49
Bank charges	<u>183.50</u>
	40,263.40

Our Thanks

The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program is only possible because of the magnificent support of many people. We especially want to thank:

- The generous financial donors who have supported our work during the past year
- The generous investors who acted so quickly to contribute to the \$75,000 emergency loan fund
- The Government of Alberta Community Spirit Program for their matching grant of \$25,000
- Trish Axten who took on the arduous task of preparing our submission to the Government of Alberta's Community Initiatives Program for matching funds for international development project
- Aftab Nazir Khan, who utilized his personal reputation as a pioneer development practitioner in Pakistan, to secure critical meetings for us with potential funders in Islamabad.
- UEnd for their sponsorship that enable our donors to receive charitable tax receipts

Who we are

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