



HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program

CANADA UPDATE Spring 2012

Hope in the Face of Sectarian Violence

On February 29, gunmen wearing military uniforms but widely believed to be members of an outlawed terrorist group, killed 16 men after pulling them off buses traveling between Rawlipindi (near Islamabad) and Gilgit (the capital of Gilgit-Baltistan Province). Fifteen of these men were Shia Muslims and the other was the driver of one of the buses. This horrific incident began weeks of mimetic violence between Shias and Sunnis, prompting the Government to shut down the Karakorum Highway, suspend flights into Gilgit, close educational institutions and other public buildings and impose weeks of 24-hour curfew. Communication channels were also jammed, leaving people without cell phone and Internet coverage and only sporadic access to land lines.

Although the HiMaT Project is not based in Gilgit, these events have had a significant impact on the communities with which we are working and on the Project itself. While we have not yet received firsthand accounts from community members, we know that many families had sons and daughters attending high school, university or college in Gilgit, and must of suffered anxiety as they waited to hear news about their wellbeing. As well, they may have experienced shortages of medical supplies, food and fuel because of the closure of the highway. Certainly, their hearts were broken by the daily news of violence among their fellow citizens.

At the same time, it was virtually impossible for us to communicate with the HiMaT team in Aliabad. We had been scheduled to travel to the project area on March 9th, but just 30 hours before our departure, we made the difficult decision to postpone our trip. It just isn't feasible to travel without passing through Gilgit, and our Project advisors and team members strongly urged us to wait until the situation becomes more stable. We had hoped to be able to travel in May, but will try again early in July.

Many of you have been in touch with us, expressing your concerns and your prayers that peace can be restored in this beautiful corner of our shared planet. Thank you so much. This support has meant a lot to us.

The good news is that the HiMaT Project has continued to grow in depth and reach. We have been humbled again and again by the incredible support from the communities in the Project area, and by the creative and diligent work of the HiMaT team. This newsletter will try to take you on a little journey to Hunza to see for yourself what has been happening.

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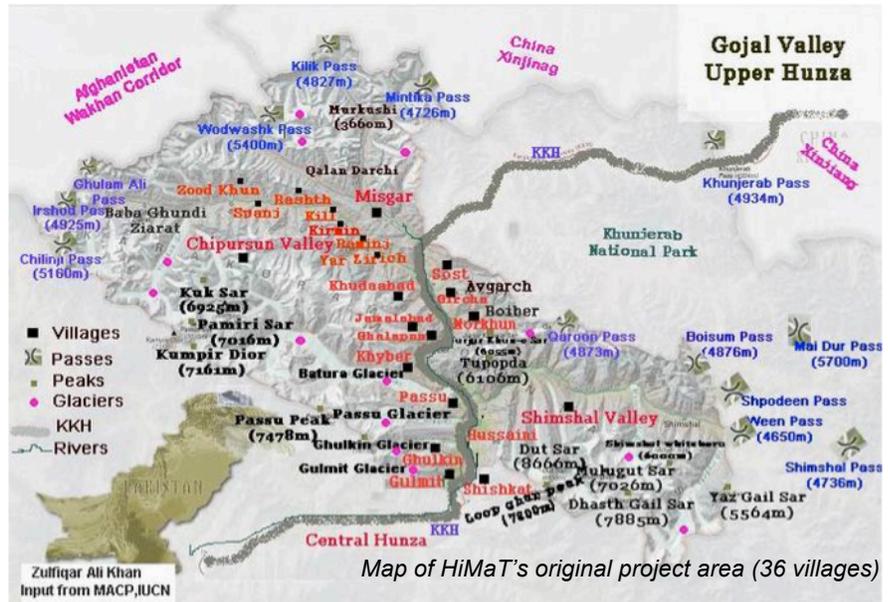
Seabuck thorn berries—a potential source of economic development for Hunza communities

The HiMaT Project in Brief

For some of you, this may be your first introduction to HiMaT. Himat (also spelled himmat) is an Urdu word for courage, self-drive, spunk or empowerment. We have chosen to write the word as HiMaT to reinforce the concepts of effort (Mehnat) and transformative power or strength (Taaqat).

The HiMaT Project believes that an essential key to peace in Pakistan and greater security in the world is constructive development. When people feel that they are respected members of the human family, when they can live with dignity and hope for the future of their children, and when they can benefit equitably from and contribute to the social, economic, political and cultural richness of their communities, their country and the world, then we all benefit.

HiMaT is a partnership between the Karakorum Area Development Organization (KADO), a reputable NGO that has been creating small economic development projects in Hunza, especially for women and other vulnerable segments of the population for more than a decade, the Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning (Michael Bopp and Judie Bopp) in Canada, and a German businessman, Frieder Krups. HiMaT really got off the ground in July 2008 when it began supporting development efforts in the 11 villages of the Chipursan Valley in the most northern region of Pakistan high in the Himalayan Mountains. In spite of a massive landslide in January 2010, which virtually isolated upper Hunza from the rest of Pakistan for many months and continues to have a crippling effect on the region's economy (see our Fall 2010 Newsletter), HiMaT expanded its efforts to work with all 36 villages north of the landslide. Since July 2011, because of requests from communities in central and lower Hunza, HiMaT began to work with another 51 villages.



An example of the many beautiful handicrafts from Hunza

“But what do you actually do?”, some of you may be asking. The overall goal is for KADO to become a regional support centre that will work with indigenous institutions, leaders and communities to build capacity for sustainable human wellbeing and prosperity. HiMaT partners have identified several key elements that need to be incorporated into this capacity development work:

- ❖ Encouraging a spark of hope and a vision of positive possibility
- ❖ Opening a window to information and resources from around the world
- ❖ Stimulating change through an ongoing cycle of learning, planning, action and reflection
- ❖ Strengthening the ability of local institutions to lead development initiatives

The following pages describe some of the activities that HiMaT has carried out in the past year or so related to these keys.

Using the Arts to inspire Hope and gladden Hearts



New poetry and songs emerging from the HiMaT development forums



Sharing traditional songs and dances



Stepping forward with courage



Singing can be a ladder for the soul



Gojal Open University: HiMaT Development Leadership Series



The HiMaT Development Leadership Program brings together approximately 120 community leaders (representing village and women's councils and other organizations) as well as social and economic entrepreneurs and other active citizens from upper Hunza approximately three times a year. At least 40% of those attending are women and communities are also encouraged to make sure that youth (both male and female) are well represented. During these four-day sessions, participants study a specific topic related to development progress, share cultural traditions and hold forums on a variety of subjects (e.g. natural resource management, health, and household livelihood).

First Session: March 2011- Gulmit

This session was entitled *The Tree of Development*. It focused on questions such as: What is development? What develops in "development"? What are the fruits (outcomes) of development? What are the roots that nourish development? The session also examined the type of leadership that is required to support the journey toward greater community prosperity and wellbeing. We were honoured to have a visit from the Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly to this session.



LSO area consultation

Speaker Wazir Baig



Opening the morning session with singing Holy Verses

Compiling a report from a transect walk to view Khyber's water system.



Second Session: July 2011 –Khyber

The topic for this session was *Planning Development Action*. Participants learned how to identify an entry point for development activities and how to ignite a spark of hope. They practiced participatory techniques for involving community members and developed a plan for a development project in their communities. They also designed a monitoring and evaluation framework to keep track of the results of their efforts. The first Gojal Women's Conference was also held during this session (see p. 8). Community volunteers hosted their colleagues from other communities and prepared daily meals.



(Left) The lake formed by the Attabad landslide covers part of Gulmit village.

(Right) July is a wonderful time to visit Khyber



Village children checking out the foreigners



Gojal Open University: HiMaT Development Leadership Series



Third Session: November 2011- Hussaini

Participants enjoyed the hospitality of the Hussaini community as they learned how to promote business and other types of economic development. One of the session's activities involved testing how much economic activity could be generated as participants traded skills and goods without formal currency. The session also benefited from hearing about the experiences of local entrepreneurs who have been creating viable businesses using local resources and knowledge.



Expanding the circle

The approximately 120 men, women and youth who have attended the Gojal University workshops and development forums have committed themselves to sharing the material with their friends, family members and colleagues in their own communities. At last count, more than 1,200 people throughout the region are participating in learning and action study circles. Final editing of the course booklets is now also underway to allow the them to be used by other government and non-government development organizations.



Local community buy-in

These sessions are felt to be so important that local communities are taking turns hosting them (providing accommodation and meeting space as well as preparing meals) and each community is covering the transportation costs of their members. This contribution on the part of the communities is valued at approximately \$4,000 per session.



Tea break during the November workshop in Hussaini

Using local natural resources





Local Community Planning & Technical Support

One of the key lines of action of the HiMaT Project is to build the capacity of local development institutions to plan for, implement and monitor development initiatives. As mentioned in the introduction to this newsletter, the 87 villages with which we are working are organized into 9 clusters, each comprised of

between 3 and 19 villages in geographic proximity to each other. Each of these clusters has an umbrella development support organization, usually with 1 or more paid staff (e.g. a manager, a social mobilizer and an accountant). Each village, in turn, has at least one village (men's) and one women's organization (VO/WOs). In most cases, these bodies were established up to a decade ago, primarily to serve as a micro savings and loan program (e.g. to provide loans for medical or wedding/funeral expenses or for small business start-up costs). Many of these organizations petered out over the years for lack of training and technical support, especially in the really remote communities of upper Hunza where we first began working. People lost confidence in the programs when loans were not repaid and no systematic processes were in place to track outstanding debts.

One of the first goals of the HiMaT Project was to revitalize these bodies and orient them to the constructive development processes such as those stimulated by the courses and development forums sponsored by Gojal Open University. Three ongoing lines of action are being used to achieve this goal (see below). The HiMaT team has also supported the creation of two new women's organization in the camps that house families displaced by the Attabad landslide.

#1 Audits

An important step in re-establishing the confidence of community members in their village and women's organizations as well as the umbrella local support organizations has been to conduct audits of their financial records, enhance the skills of those charged with maintaining those records, and develop a new bookkeeping software program. As a further incentive to financial transparency and accountability, only those communities with audited books are eligible for participation in some of the HiMaT activities (such as the "quick-win" projects—see the following page).



#2 Community development planning processes



The Community Story (needs assessment) and 10-Year Action Plan have been completed for Chipursan LSO (CLSO). The Community Story (needs assessment) was completed for the Gojal Regional Support Organization (GRSO). 2012 will see the 10-Year Plan completed for GRSO and the process begun with the Mountain Area Support Organization (MASO). In addition, the fourth course of Gojal Open University was focused on learning skills related to planning, implementing and monitoring development projects.

#3 "Walking with" local institutions

HiMaT team members regularly visit local communities to celebrate their successes, to help resolve unity issues, to consult with them about their challenges and to offer technical advice. Two issues in particular have been the focus of this work: enhancing the sustainability of development institutions through the creation of social enterprises and finding solutions to the agricultural crisis facing this region of Pakistan.

Quick-win Projects

Quick-win projects are small social and economic development initiatives planned and implemented by small group of men, women or youth. These project have three purposes:

1. bring about some improvement in social and economic life;
2. mobilize support for constructive development by demonstrating a concrete benefit; and
3. build knowledge and skills related to constructive development by doing.



The first “quick-win” projects began in 2009 in the Chipursan Valley. Two hundred forty-eight people from Chipursan’s eleven villages were involved in implementing thirty-three projects with an investment of about \$60 for each project.

In 2010/2011, the communities within the areas covered by the Chipursan Local Support Organization and the Gojal Rural Support Organization were offered the opportunity to participate in another round of quick-win projects, with the maximum award being increased to approximately \$120. Along with the increased amount of the award came increased expectations with respect to the quality of the proposals submitted and the reporting that is done (a topic that was covered in the third session of the Gojal Open University program). Sixty-four projects involving 367 community members are currently underway. As well, quick-win projects have been announced for the residents of the camps housing the families displaced by the flooding caused by the Attabad landslide.

It is important to recognize that participating community members are contributing many resources to these projects themselves, both as in-kind labour and materials, but also in cash expenses. The quick-wins have become a catalyst for people to come together, consult about their needs and assets, and take action to improve their lives. The small cash contribution that HiMaT makes has mobilized an enormous amount of energy and, in that way, had an impact far greater than expected.

Here are some examples of the many innovative initiatives being carried out as quick-win projects.

- Extend irrigation channels to open new agricultural land
- Control erosion by improving existing irrigation systems
- Introduce computer education programs to ensure students will do well once they leave the village school
- Introduce new crops and agricultural practices
- Train a first aid volunteer to bring primary health services to the village
- Train women in sewing and weaving skills
- Develop a business producing clothing for markets in Sost
- Tutor students during vacation time to increase their chances at higher education opportunities
- Repair a community water tank to prevent pollution from cattle and dirt
- Create an early childhood education program to ensure healthy development
- Create clean drinking water and waste disposal systems
- Upgrade a community hall





Gojal Women's Conference

A first-ever Gojal women's conference was held in July, 2011 and attended by more than 80 women from about 30 villages. This was a very significant event that gave younger and older women the opportunity to share their perspectives about how increased access to higher education and information through digital media is changing attitudes and behaviours. Women also reflected on the role of the Women's Councils in the development process and what is needed to strengthen these institutions.



The commitment to this conference was demonstrated by the fact that it is not easy for women to be away from their homes for an extended period. They still bear the primary responsibility for the household and livestock and had to make arrangements for female relatives to cover their duties while they were away. This is an activity that we need to plan for on an annual basis if at all possible.



A Focus on Agriculture

Our project continues to try to find innovative solutions to the agricultural challenges the communities are facing. One initiative was to buy high-quality fertilizer in bulk and then sell it to LSOs at a reduced rate that also took advantage of a contribution of the transportation costs on the part of the company supplying the fertilizer from their CSR fund. Initial work on developing a farmer

school for the spring of 2012 (with funding support from the government of Pakistan and the Aga Khan Rural Support Program) has also occurred. This project will encourage farmers to diversify their agricultural activities and well as help them gain access to agricultural inputs, knowledge and skills to take advantage of new opportunities.



Wheat



Apricots drying



Apple tree

The HiMaT Team



Ajaz Ali, Project Manager



Lal Bano, Project Advisor



The HiMaT team traveling across the Attabad Lake on a cold day in November 2011



Didar Ali, Education Animator



Ashraf Karim, Economic Development Animator



Muhammad Panah, Governance Animator

Our Thanks!

Community Volunteers

Almost 200 volunteers from host communities fed and cared for the needs of the workshop participants, often from early morning until long into the night.



Canadian Volunteers

Dr. Bill Hanlon, a family physician and specialist in mountain medicine traveled to Hunza in March and is working on the establishment of a tele-health system for HiMat communities.

Caylee Hong, a McGill law student with an interest in Islamic jurisprudence traveled to Hunza for 3 weeks in July to conduct a study on natural resource management.





Our Donors

We are humbled and honoured by the trust of the following individuals and organizations who have put their confidence in the power of positive change for the people of Hunza and in doing so for the human family as a whole. With your help, the Project raised just over \$125,000 in 2011.

Please note that we do not use professional fundraisers and 100% of the money raised goes directly to Project costs. We will be happy to provide you with a full financial report if requested.

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|--|--|------------------------------|
| ❖ The Alberta Government
Community Spirit Program | ❖ Four Worlds Centre for
Development Learning | ❖ Sharon and Mike McDonald |
| ❖ Carp Calgary Chapter | ❖ Lanice Jones | ❖ Garry Nissen |
| ❖ CI Investments | ❖ Yasmin and Shafik Kanji | ❖ Jackie and Brian Skrypnek |
| ❖ Arthur Clark | ❖ Patti and Glenn Lott | ❖ Sylvia and Michael Simpson |
| ❖ Ernest Enns | ❖ The Mary Tidlund Foundation | ❖ Uend Poverty Foundation |
| | | ❖ Marilyn and Heinz Unger |

We also thank the following individuals for their in-kind

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Jennifer Dundas & Bob Dickson: digital camera | - Jackie & Brian Skrypnek: hosting a HiMaT dinner |
| - Mary Epp: laptop computer | - Shirley & Hugh Pepper: hosting a HiMaT dinner |
| - Bill Hanlon: laptop computer | - Yasmin & Shafik Kanji: hosting a HiMaT dinner |

Please forgive us if we have forgotten someone!

How you can help

Offer financial support

Here is an estimate of our financial needs for 2012. Our costs are higher than last year because we have expanded into 50 more communities. We welcome contributions earmarked especially for one of the items below, but we also appreciate general contribution that allow us to respond agilely to emerging opportunities. Please remember that while it may not seem as appealing to support salaries and office costs, without our field staff and the project office, we could not have accomplished what we have reported here. All donations are tax receiptable.

Salaries for the 5 HiMaT field staff	40,000.00
Team training	3,000.00
HiMaT office expenses	6,000.00
3 Development leadership workshops and development forums	25,000.00
Annual women's conference	2,000.00
Development planning and other types of support to local institutions	10,000.00
Quick-win projects	30,000.00
Project expansion	8,000.00
Travel costs for Canadians	<u>30,000.00</u>
Total	155,000.00

Give time & knowledge

There are so many ways that volunteers can help, for example by sharing expertise related to appropriate technology for housing, food preservation & storage, agricultural practices, small and medium enterprise development. We also welcome volunteers to help with fundraising and other tasks on the Canadian end. If you want to be involved, please contact us at:

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 403-932-0882