



# HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program

## CANADA UPDATE

Winter 2009

### Why Pakistan

Pakistan is widely recognized as a pivot point for creating greater peace and security in the world. In reality, there are two Pakistans. One of them is a type of epicenter for extremism and violence. The other is millions of human beings who reject violence and extremism and who are working day and night to build the foundations of sustainable peace, human dignity, prosperity and wellbeing for all. They recognize that the road to sustainable peace in Pakistan can only be built through constructive development processes. The most troubled areas of the country are also those with the worst human development outcomes—the most extreme poverty, the poorest health and the lowest education levels.

### The Goal of the HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program

*The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program* is focused on building the capacity of remote rural communities, local institutions and leaders for sustainable peace, human dignity, prosperity and wellbeing through the creation of a regional training, coaching and support centre, with an initial pilot project in the Gilgit-Baltistan province of Pakistan. This Centre's programs are designed to enhance a spirit of hope and entrepreneurship and to build the knowledge and skills that will enable local institutions and leaders to manage their own development processes. The Centre will also act as a "window to the world" by creating connections between these indigenous development processes and best practice ideas and organizations, as well as business mentors from around the world. In the first 5-year phase, a prototype training and support centre will be established, and its programs will be developed and piloted with 10 clusters of villages (80 – 100 villages), reaching approximately 100,000 people.

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## The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership & Development Program UPDATE Winter 2009

### Dispatches from the Field: November 2009

*What follows are excerpts from messages addressed to family and friends in Canada during Michael and Judie Bopp's October 28 to November 12 trip to northern Pakistan.*

*Oct 29:* Yesterday, when we arrived in Islamabad, we found that the flights to Gilgit had been cancelled because of the poor visibility in the mountains, so we set out on our 15-hour drive up the Karakorum Highway. Since we had only arrived off the plane from Bangkok to Islamabad (after traveling from Calgary to Vancouver, Vancouver to Hong Kong, and Hong Kong to Bangkok), we were exhausted! Glad to be here though. It's beautiful and we have had a great day of meetings with the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Development of the Government, the Rapindi Foundation (which has initiated a wonderful gem polishing and carving training programme), Izhar Hunzai, the Director of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, and Dr. Azziz, a truly inspiring man who has created a health insurance plan for the poor. We are driving to Karimabad tonight and will be there for a few days.



*Oct 30:* We are in Karimabad—truly one of the most beautiful places on earth. In view of our hotel and the offices of KADO (the Karakorum Area Development Organization), our Pakistan indigenous NGO partner, are 4 towering snow-covered mountains, each over 7,000 meters. Despite the news you hear daily about Pakistan, here it is peaceful and the work with our partners is going very well.



### Why start in Gilgit-Balistan?

The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program is being piloted in Gilgit-Baltistan (formerly called the Northern Areas). There are several important reasons for this. First, Gilgit-Baltistan is the base of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), which gave birth to the local and area development institutions our project is focused on strengthening. AKRSP is an important collaborator as we build the training and support centre and establish the critical linkages to funding, business opportunities and technical know-how that will help to really kick-start development progress.

Second, Gilgit-Baltistan is relatively peaceful and free of insurgency, but is not far from affected areas. At the same time, it does have pockets of extremely poor people living in very remote and climactically and geographically difficult terrain. Working in these areas as a pilot will allow us to fully develop an intact working model for comprehensive poverty alleviation that can be adapted for anywhere in the rugged northern provinces of Pakistan while avoiding political and security related disruptions until the program is ready to be scaled up and replicated across the North.



## Dispatches from the Field, continued

*Nov 2:* We have spent a wonderful and productive 4 days working with KADO. This is a highly respected organization—one that AKRSP says is the most accepted and valued NGO in northern Pakistan. The staff is highly capable, and our collaborative work is going very well. We have agreed on the project plan and a one-year work plan. We have planned our community development forum for the Chipursan Valley (our pilot site), and we are working on the core curriculum plan for the Regional Training Institute that is at the heart of our initiative.

Regarding security, the Hunza area of Pakistan is completely peaceful. To illustrate, they are having an election campaign for the newly established Gilgit-Baltistan province, the spirit and climate is more like a lead up to a friendly football match with banners, songs, cheers, speeches. While there certainly are other areas of Pakistan with serious problems, this area is very peaceful. Islamabad is a bit tense, and the few days we will be there, we will need to avoid crowded markets and be guided by our many very wise and experienced friends who are taking very good care of us. But it is great to be with so many wonderful Pakistani people, who are determined to not allow the tiny minority of extremists to dominate their lives. Like most complex problem sets, this one will not be solved by any one player, either from within or from outside the country.



*Nov 6:* We are back in central Hunza (Karimabad) after 3 days in the Chipursan Valley. Chipursan is a remote valley with 11 villages located close to the Chinese border and also close to Tajikistan. The average elevation of the villages is 3000 meters, so nights are now very cold (perhaps -5), and the houses (and our traditional guest house) are unheated. We had a fantastic 3 days, engaging more than 100 community leaders, including women, youth, elders and institutional leaders in a very powerful, spiritually centered dialogue on their development realities and needs.

From this work we are now ready to help them to develop a 10-year framework for how the Regional Learning and Support Centre we are creating can work effectively to build the capacity of their local and area institutions, leaders, activists and entrepreneurs. We worked behind the KADO team and coached them as they facilitated and recorded the participatory community engagement process. Really, this is a wonderful team. It's hard to imagine how we could have found a better partner. We will work here for one more day and then its off to Gilgit and finally to Islamabad for meetings with prospective donors.



## What's in a name?

Himat (also spelled Himmat) is an Urdu word for courage, self-drive, spunk and empowerment. We have chosen to spell is word as HiMaT to reinforce the concepts of effort (Mehnat) and transformative power or strength (Taaqat).



## The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership & Development Program UPDATE Winter 2009

### Dispatches from the Field, continued

*Nov 9:* We are back in Islamabad, after 18 bone-jarring hours on the road yesterday. We tried to shorten the journey by taking a secondary road over a pass (4100 meters high) through some really wild and beautiful country, but snow on the road slowed us down enough that we really didn't save any time.

We are now in a lovely small guesthouse practically next door to the headquarters of the President of Pakistan. This means that the security in the area is really tight, so we are confident that we are very safe! For the next two days, we have meetings with prospective donors and other well-placed individuals in the government and international community. Our Canadian colleague Aftab Nazir Khan has been very helpful in organizing our schedule, as has Ghulam Ali, the Executive Director of KADO.



We have decided to leave Islamabad a couple of days earlier than originally planned, since our movements are a bit restricted here. (For example, it is impossible to make appointments with people in the UN or USAID at this time because of security concerns.) Michael and I are going to take the opportunity to stop off in Hong Kong for two days, and return home on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> as scheduled. We have enjoyed receiving messages from some of you, and look forward to showing you all pictures and sharing stories of the amazing opportunities to support development in this part of planet earth.

*Nov 11:* We left Islamabad at about midnight last night after two jam-packed days meeting with potential funders (World Bank, Swiss Aid, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, etc.) as well as meetings with some very interesting potential partners. Clearly our vision and concept is being extremely well received, and we feel certain that we will find at least some resources from inside Pakistan to support our in-country operations. Now we are in Hong Kong in a nice hotel, settled into the best beds we have seen in weeks, after a great bowl of snake and forest mushroom soup and a long walk through Hong Kong's Soho district.

### What's Happening Next?

The next few months are busy indeed. Here is a sample of what is happening. A "community improvement ideas contest" is being held in the Chipursan Valley with prizes of 5,000 Rupees being offered to support a youth, women's and men's project in each of the 11 villages (thanks to the generous contribution of a Canadian donor). The development forum consultation is being written up as a "community story" in preparation for the development of a 5-year action plan. Preparations are underway for the next international field visit, which will see a field testing of the first curriculum module as well as an orientation for a cadre of business mentors who will provide support for the startup of a broad range of small and medium sized enterprises.

## The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership & Development Program UPDATE Winter 2009

### The Chipursan Valley Development Forum



A critical first principle of sound development practice is that “development comes from within”. While others can provide valuable support and connect insiders to the knowledge and resources they need, the will to change and the driving force of developing people’s hope, vision and united effort is a fundamental ingredient without which success is impossible.

In order for the HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development program to be effective in supporting sustainable community-led development at the grassroots in our pilot area (the Chipursan Valley), we had to begin by listening carefully and systematically to local people.

This was done through a series of participatory community engagement processes, beginning with community leaders and culminating in an intensive 2-day community consultation process held in November 2009. The methodology we used is called the “community story”, which is a participatory action research tool designed by the Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning and which has been refined through many applications in Africa, Asia, the South Pacific and indigenous North America.



The approach brings together people from all ages, sectors and walks of life at the community level. In the Chipursan Valley Development Forum we had women, men, elders, youth and school-age children working in focus groups to reflect on the full spectrum of life. They talked about what life is like now for children, youth, women, men, elders and families. They also discussed what is happening in the social relations, economic, political, environmental, cultural and spiritual dimensions of community life. They also reflected on questions about what happened in the past in all of these areas. How have things changed? How is the past creating the present? What can we learn from the past? And what about the future? What would life be like in all these areas if things were really good?

The weather was freezing (-5 in the daytime). Representatives of all 11 villages in the Chipursan Valley crammed into a tiny guest house—the biggest available meeting space—and no one wanted to leave when it was over. The excitement and enthusiasm shone like starlight in the eyes of the participants.



To top off the Forum we announced a contest. Three proposals would be selected from each of the 11 villages (one for youth, one for women and one for men). Winners would receive a small prize (5,000 rupees) to carry out any kind of project that would bring some improvement to the community as a whole and would also involve a team of at least five people in carrying out the project. Participants were excited by this opportunity to move immediately from talk to action.



## The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership & Development Program UPDATE Winter 2009

### 4 Key Lines of Action of the HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program



The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program is a joint initiative of three partner organizations. 1) KADO (the Karakorum Area Development Organization) is a well-respected, northern-Pakistan based NGO with a history of stimulating economic development activities with the region's most vulnerable populations. 2) The HiMaT Grassroots Development Foundation is based in Europe and has worked in the Kashmir region of Pakistan since 2007. 3) The Four Worlds Centre for Development is based in Canada and has worked with culturally based participatory development processes in over twenty countries for the past thirty years.

A partner meeting on the roof of KADO's office in Aliabad/Karimabad on a beautiful fall day in November '09

The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program has begun its work with a pilot project in the Chipursan Valley in the most northern part of Pakistan, which borders on both China and Afghanistan.

The Chipursan Valley consists of 11 villages that face challenges such as food insecurity, housing that lacks basic sanitation facilities and is poorly insulated for the harsh winter conditions, and a lack of access to markets. Thanks to the work of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), these villages have a local institutional structure consisting of village and women's organizations (VOs and WOs), as well as a regional development body called the Local Support Organization (LSO). Early "quick win" projects in the Chipursan Valley have introduced vegetable gardens to 80% of the households and fruit trees to 70%. As well the VO/WOs have received technical support to revive their micro-lending programmes, which had been dormant for some time.

The next phase of the HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program will focus on systematizing capacity building support for a broad range of people including the membership of the VOs/WOs/LSO, community social entrepreneurs, and youth leaders. As well, leaders from selected neighbouring LSOs will also be invited to participate in order to begin a gradual scaling up process. Four critical lines of action have been chosen to guide the work over the next five years.

A view of the stunning landscape in the Chipursan Valley.





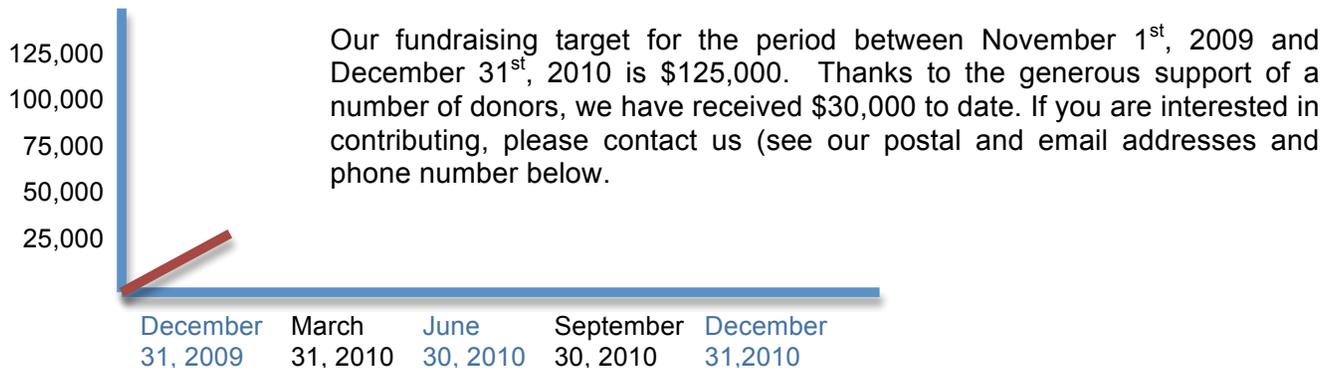
#### 4 Key Lines of Action, cont'd

1. ***Developing a vision of possibility and the spirit of hope, enterprise and service*** – Money and technical know-how are not enough to create lasting change. It is only when people have a “sparkle” in their eyes that they are ready to invest their creative energy into social and entrepreneurial action. Unless we can find a way to engage the heart of people, their communities and their institutions, we will not be able to make a shift from mere projects that come and go to a movement that spreads from heart to heart across north Pakistan—a movement that ignites the spark of hope and the spirit of enterprise and service. This will require extremely careful attention to the cultural and spiritual foundations of the communities being served by the HiMaT training, coaching and support Centre.
2. ***Strengthening indigenous institutions*** – While hundreds of village and women’s organizations have been established in Gilgit-Baltistan (and elsewhere in Pakistan), many of them have never been fully trained and supported to play the role for which they were created. The HiMaT Indigenous Leadership and Development Program will support the emergence of local institutions that are participatory and democratic in nature, and that promote sustainable development leading to measurable improvements in the social and economic life of the people and communities they serve. A fundamental goal of HiMaT Program is for these institutions to become self-sufficient within a five-year period through the creation of social enterprises and other revenue-generation streams.
3. ***Building capacity to achieve desired development outcomes*** - To achieve greater peace, prosperity and wellbeing in their communities, people will need to learn how to think, act and inter-relate in new ways. This type of learning does not happen just in classrooms, but also through mentoring as people make hands-on efforts to solve real development challenges. The HiMaT Program’s regional training, coaching and support Centre will offer a rich selection of courses focusing on such topics as mountain agriculture, small/medium business development, community health, youth development, natural resource development, leadership skills, ecology, micro-finance, human relations, and household management. It will provide access to best practice and experienced mentors from around the world.
4. ***Creating an engine for sustainable social and economic development*** – As individuals, communities and local institutions gain awareness, capacity and experience, they will want to undertake a wide variety of enterprises, development schemes and special projects. Examples of such initiatives might include an irrigation project to open up new agricultural land, a micro electrical generation scheme to support household improvement and business development, small to medium value-added businesses such as the production of jam from apricots or seabuck thorn or the creation of crafts from local wool, a community health promotion project, a youth and elder cultural strengthening initiative or a women’s enterprise project. Social and economic development activities such as these will enable the LSO to become self-supporting and also contribute to substantial improvements in the social and economic life of the people. The HiMaT Program will support these initiatives through providing access to know-how, practical coaching, and support in accessing funding and financial services.

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### Canadian Fundraising Goal



### 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 helped us reach our year-end target 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
- Popcorn Technologies for pro-bono technical support related to updating our website

### Who we are

This newsletter is published by

*Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning  
Box 395, Cochrane, Alberta, Canada T4C 1A6  
Ph: 403-932-0882, Fax: 403-932-0883  
Email: [anyone@fourworlds.ca](mailto:anyone@fourworlds.ca), Website: [fourworlds.ca](http://fourworlds.ca)*