



January 15, 2018

Hey Folks:

The 2017 trip was one of my most successful with several long term projects started and taken off my wish list. I am looking forward to checking the progress of these projects this Spring. First let me update you on the 2016 and 2017 projects.

Review of 2016-2017 Projects:

- Shoghla • Primary Girls • Jaghoori Ghazni • 100% Complete
- Tabarghanak • Middle Mixed Gender • Jaghoori Ghazni • 100% Complete
- Muradina • Girls • Malistan Ghazni • 40% complete as of May 2017
- Sar Talai Jirghai • Girls • Nawur Ghazni • 100% Complete
- Talkhak • Garmaab • 100% Complete
- Alibaig • Primary Mixed Gender • Bamyan • 90% as of September 2017



In 2017, DAI teamed up with an Afghan NGO based in Bamiyan called the Conservation Organization of Afghan Mountains (COAM) to build an environmental-based curriculum at the local school in the Nawur District Capitol in Doabi. We dedicated one thousand dollars (\$1,000 USD) to support development of the program through the purchase of educational supplies, training and educating students & faculty and, most importantly, the planting of trees and vegetation on the school property. We also dedicated an additional one thousand dollars (\$1,000 USD) to hire and train a local Afghan to travel to the Doabi in Northern Ghazni and implement a tree-planting regimen.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.



The second best time is today.

Update:

COAM sent a trainer to Doabi to work with the local school students. The results were more than I could ask for. The students were trained in Environmental Awareness as well as given the saplings, seeds, and tools to plant Russian Willows in the School Courtyard as well as build a small garden outside the school that was tended to by the students on a daily basis. During my visit I was able to witness the young men watering the garden without prompting. The small saplings were also well watered upon my arrival.

Direct Aid International will work with COAM again this Spring to continue its project in Doabi and discuss where we could locate another area to start a similar project in 2019. It is our hope that this program will grow and spread roots like the trees we plant.



For more information about COAM and its activities, please visit
<http://www.myafghanmountains.org>

I want to share the update sent from Rahim, Mr. Qasimi's son, who keeps me informed during the year.



Dear Hoffman

Latest development about the construction work of schools in these years:

1- The construction work of Qashnag High School has been totally completed, 100% of its budget has been paid. This school is co education school, this school has 6 rooms, the budget of this was 6000 \$, this school located in Maslistan district.

2- The construction work of Ja Ka Peshi High School has been totally completed, 100% of its budget has been paid, this school is for girls, is has 8 rooms, the budget was 10000\$, I paid 8000\$ and just 2000\$ is remain.

3- The construction work of Tayna Qeshlaq 90% has been completed, the budget was 7000\$ but for some case Mr. Qasemi paid 4000\$ and just 3000\$ is remain, this school is co education school.

4- The High School of Do Abey has been designed by three professional engineers, this High School includes 16 rooms and 3 halls, which is considered a standard high school and a huge amount is needed for its construction, every governmental school does not have more than 14 rooms, but we have 16 rooms in this High School, the specified budget for this school is sufficient just for its skeleton (walls), another budget is needed for its carpentry and ceilings, currently 10 people (three engineers, and seven workers) are working in this school, as long as the weather is suitable we will continue the construction work, at the end the progress report and photos will be sent. We spend 50% of the budget, this school is co education school, this school is located in the center of the Nawur district. We sent the photo of this school by email.

Totally we planed 4 schools this years.



The Tom Stone School.



The Doabi school project has been one that Mr. Qasimi and I have wanted to do for a number of years. We decided that this was the year to start our most ambitious project in 17 years of working together. Doabi has always been Home Base for me when traveling. The District Governor, Afghan Police and Ministry of Education all reside within a hundred meters of the school location. There is a clinic next to us as well.

This project will be a 3-year project with an estimated \$60,000 cost.

My hope is to renovate the old school as well and have room for a Library, Science Lab, Environmental Studies, Hostel, Computer Lab and Long Distance Learning or CD Rom Learning powered by Solar.

The goal is to have this school be compared to our Baba School in Bamyan at half the cost.

The Baba School is considered one of the best schools in the country with the Afghan Minister of Education visiting it 3 times already.

Mr. Qasimi says that the Doabi School will be the largest school in Rural Afghanistan. Adding on a renovated additional 9 rooms would enable us to make this a model school for other regions to come visit and set their sights on.

The Willett Foundation (Colorado) is funding this school and has supported DAI for several years. This donation is given in the name of Tom Stone who was the 1st Vermonter killed in Afghanistan. With over 20 schools built from funding received in Tom Stone's name, we decided that this location should be the one named after him.



My Wish List grows: Bamiyan Afghanistan - Ski It If You Can.

In 2007, Eric Friedman, from Mad River Glen Ski Area, and I worked together to collect and ship a modest assortment of skis and boots to Bamiyan, Afghanistan to assist the Agha Kahn Eco Tourism project for Back Country Skiing. Along with donations from several European groups, we were proud to say that we were able to assist local Afghans in their endeavor to build a program that would train local Afghans as ski guides as well as allow locals to learn to ski.

Seven years later, two young men named Ali Joya and Sajjad patiently escorted me to the top of an 11,000-foot mountain in Ali Beg. I was the second oldest tourist they had ever escorted. Ali and Sajjad will be in South Korea this February representing Afghanistan as the 1st competitors for Afghanistan in a Winter Olympics.

Ali and Sajjad, along with Eric and I, have been dreaming and discussing how we could build a simple rope tow in Bamiyan to work on the next step for the region's ever-expanding hope of drawing tourists and locals to the mountains of Bamiyan to recreate.

The concept is simple and the cost modest in comparison to other alternatives. Our hope is that when one is built, the locals could duplicate the concept easily in their own areas, starting where Vermont did in the 1940's and 50's by using old vehicles to build small ski areas all over the state.

I personally feel that this project fits Direct Aid International's mission statement perfectly.

Bringing a Sense of Normalcy to Crisis Situations



If you know of anyone who would like to work on this project in the coming months by either locating funding or assisting with the design please feel free to refer them to me personally.

I plan to travel, on behalf of Direct Aid International, to Afghanistan again in the Spring/Summer of 2018. We already have several requests for schools in rural Northern Ghazni and Bamiyan. Your financial assistance will allow us, once again, to meet our yearly quota of three to four schools. In 17 trips to Afghanistan, we have funded 45 schools and one library. None of this could have been accomplished without your support. If you are receiving this communication then, in some way, you have made it possible for our small group of volunteers to work in a steady, effective manner. I thank you for your trust in me and the effort I make to use your contributions as effectively as possible. With your support, I look forward to continued success.

I hope all is well in your world.

Peace,
Jonathan



the next generation...