



January, 2019

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Hey Folks:

I seem to say the same thing year after year but, again, 2018 has turned out to be one of, if not my favorite, trip to the region! It was exciting to be able to see so many of our projects moving forward and to see some completed. Moving forward into 2019 is just as exciting. Contemplating all the accomplishments of the past year can not help but lead me to think about all the good that we have in store for the upcoming year. Let's look back at what we have accomplished.

### **2017 and prior Update**

The schools that were started in 2017 have been completed or are close to completion as I write this letter to you. Following is a breakdown of some of what we accomplished.





### **Tom Stone School:**

The Doabi school is in memory of Tom Stone who was the 1<sup>st</sup> Vermonter killed in action in Afghanistan. It is one of 30 schools that Direct Aid International has built with funds raised in his memory. I hope that it won't be the last. It is only a foundation at the moment but a foundation that will be a template for the future. Our goal is to have it become a model school that other regions of the country will try to replicate over time. Tom was a special man, so this school is close to my heart. This time next year, it is my hope that we will have photos of school children looking out from windows and doors of the school with a roof over their heads.

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase (foundation, walls) of the Doabi school is complete. Photos sent since my visit last spring have shown that the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of construction has made progress but is not complete. They are behind schedule completing the roof construction due to the fact that supplies such as iron beams and cement could not be transported due to insecurity on the main road from Ghazni to Doabi. DAI anticipated this and has encouraged the Village Elders and Engineers to be patient when determining how and when to transport supplies. Construction has ceased until spring and the melting of snow in the mountain passes.

### **2018 Projects and Funding**

DAI distributed \$50,000 for school construction projects and repairs. We started 2 schools and one Library during the 2018 trip. We also distributed small grants in several villages where we have already built schools. These grants were to assist the village in improvements and upkeep of the schools. Following is a breakdown of how the funds were distributed.

- \$20,000 Doabi (Tom Stone School)
- \$12,000 Sabzak – Jirghai 6- 8 room school depending on cost of materials & labor
- \$5,000 Qushnak 3 room school
- \$6,000 Malnak Library
- \$2,500 Baahi - roof, floors, walls
- \$2,000 Jamboth – (Jake Payshee) doors, windows
- \$1,000 Alton - Walls, Glass for windows
- \$1,500 additional to Jaka Payshee school to complete work on the walls and roof
- \$1,500 Korea - Roof and Walls
- \$50,000 TOTAL**

### **School Improvements: ongoing**

In 2017, Direct Aid International decided to start delivering small, \$1000 to \$2,500 “gifts” to help previous school projects either finish construction or make improvements to existing structures. Mr. Qasimi and I hope to set aside 3-5 thousand dollars again this year to support previous school projects. Here is the most recent update from Mr. Qasimi via translator.

Please note slight differences in spelling. This is due to different translators and how they phonetically spell the project. I have made several notations but choose to keep my original spelling for future reference.



*Hi Jonathan,*

*Yesterday I was with General Qasemi and I translated what you wrote on email. Mr. Qasemi reported something that are as follows:*

- *Maknak's Library is completely done and the money has been paid.*
- *All the money of the Qoshnak (Koshnak) School has been paid.*
- *All amount of money for improvements & repairing of Qorya School has been paid.*
- *All amount of money for improvements & repairing of Altan School has been paid.*
- *Jambod School in Malistan District the building structure is done and all the windows were fixed, all amount of money has been paid.*
- *School of Sabzak-e-Jerghai is completed and they brought some photos of their school to Qasemi, but Qasemi said that the last amount of their money isn't paid because he wants to be completely sure that every part of their school is completed, then he will pay the last amount of their money.*
- *Dowawe ( Doabi) School (Nawour district school) all the walls were completed and they need to put a steel concrete ring on the walls for ceiling, but they bought some Tons of Steels and Cements from Ghazni city because of insecurity & bad situation on the way they can't send the materials to Nawour when the security on the way become better they will send the materials.*

*Finally Mr. Qasemi is completely fine and he is doing well. Mr. Qasemi told that say “Hi” to your parents from my side and he hopes you and your parents will be fine. I hope all will be well with you and your friends and your parents.*

*Peace,*

*Mohammad Naseer Qasemi*





### Other Project Updates:

Last year I wrote that my friends, Ali and Sajjad, would be competing in the Olympics. Unfortunately, due to strict FIS rules, Ali and Sajjad did not gain enough points during FIS competitions and did not qualify for the Olympics. They accepted the International Olympic Committee invitation to be "Guests" of the committee and traveled to South Korea to observe the competition. It is my hope that we will see them compete in 2022.

Our plans to build a rope tow have been delayed. It has been hard to organize a group in Bamiyan who could see the project started. It is still on my list, and is one I have been quietly working on since leaving last spring.

One project that is taking root is our collaboration with COAM, an environmental program in Doabi. Sardar and I have agreed to plant 1000 trees in the area near a recently built dam. The small reservoir had over 100 ducks as summer guests. The front cover of the 2019 calendar is where we will plant the trees this year.

I plan to travel, on behalf of Direct Aid International, to Afghanistan again in the Spring/Summer of 2019. 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 47 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*



If you know of anyone who would like to work on this project in the coming months please feel free to refer them to me personally.

