

Hey Folks,

DAI has had another successful year. We are in the process of constructing approximately 20 new classrooms in 3 new villages and a 3 room addition in Qarnala, our second school back in 2005.

The trip to Hezerajat this past summer was quick (7days)and quiet , (no music when riding with Mr. Qasimi).The roads we took this time were not the ones from the past 8 years. Last summer was the 1st time I did not visit Ghazni at least once on my way in or out. I was disappointed that I was not able to see friends who I have known for years, I hope that 2011 might be different security wise.

2010 projects

We made our way to the village of Kalo about an hour south of Bamiyan City. Kalo was supposed to be our 1st school built in Bamiyan province; The Vermont Guard had members stationed in the area and this project is in honor of a fallen soldier Tom Stone, near and dear to VNG members.

Guardsmen who visited Kalo this fall helped us realize that no construction had started on the school. Mr. Qasimi, busy with elections, communicated to me that the price had risen from the 12 thousand dollar estimate and agreement to nearly 30 thousand. I should have a better understanding of this when I visit next summer, but Mr Qasimi and I both agreed to locate another village who was in need of classrooms. Mr Qasimi informed me that Pandala was a village we could consider and I agreed. I look forward to seeing construction on Stoney's fifth school in progress when I arrive next summer.

The villages of Shemalto and Jorgai are the other two new locations for 2010 . Shemalto is building six new rooms to accommodate their 380 students, Shemalto had six rooms already but it was evident that there was a need for more classroom space. Jorgai students were attending school in a Mosque, To me it is a good sign when a village wants to make education independent of outside influences. I hope to see the number of young girls attending school in Jorgai rise from the 50 attending school now to well over a hundred in the next two years.

Time was not on my side this year. Visiting 12 villages was on our list and we had less than 7 days to get to Kabul and back. I had four schools to visit and document as well as give a speech and have a customary meal of some kind. Along the way we made stops in all but Bahtu and Eserak. After several celebrations we literally hopped in the van and took off waving as we drove out of sight. This summer I spent more time traveling than visiting with villagers: It is the nature of the beast I guess.

2009 projects

2009 was our most successful year as far as the number of rooms we were able to fund Bariki, Bid, Safedab, Tobi Garmob, were the four villages where we started projects in 2009. They are featured in this years calendar along with the village students and elders. Bahtu is considered finished, but the other three as of last summer are still in need of doors, windows and, in Safedab, a roof as well.

Previous school projects

Youth in Eserak, Yakhshi, Garmob, Borjigai, Alton and Bahtu and Qarnala are all attending school on a normal basis. Most of these schools are considered finished but all do need some attention. Doors and windows are on my list, Garmob wants a computer added to the list.

Mir Bacha Kot Library

The Library appeared to be in operation at one of its most organized states in the 6 plus years of existence. It was relatively clean, books were on the shelves and library cards with photo ID's were being handed out to new members. I asked them to use the 500 dollars I left with the principal to finish the exterior of the building and paint it. I told him that it should be finished before my return next summer if they indeed wished to receive another 500 dollars for operating expenses.

What else is New

Thanks to my friend Peter (stationed in Bamiyan), Mad River Glen and I teamed up to collect and ship 9 pairs of tele skis and 9 pairs of tele boots to a fledging outback tour guide project for winter treks into the Bamiyan Mountains. We are hopeful that we can do another collection of equipment after the ski season that would build up the inventory of equipment needed for tourism based skiing in Bamiyan. If you have, or know of used Telemark equipment that could be donated for this project please feel free to contact me via e-mail at hoffman@directaidinternational.org

On the home front DAI has been keeping me very busy. My free time the next few months is quickly filling with presentations, meeting's and the continual correspondence. There are several projects in the works that will not bear fruit for 2011 but could make 2012 a good year.

2011 projects

I think it would be best if we reserved ten thousand dollars for bringing all 14 current schools to completion. I decided last summer to *Hold Off* until 2011 on this designation of funds. Several schools still had plans for completion without asking for assistance from us. I am not sure what will be accomplished since my visit last summer, but was informed that Tobi Garmobs shipment of doors and glass for windows was hijacked on its way from Ghazni, leaving the village with no funds available to offset the loss.

Technology has improved communication between trips. Mr Qasimi has an e-mail account; gone are the days when I just showed up at Mr. Qasimis door in Ghazni. This year I have an additional resource, Moheb (from Afghanistan), is an exchange student at Essex High School. With his help translating we were able to cover a lot of territory in 15 minutes on speaker phone.

Mr Qasimi wanted me to extend his best wishes and good health to you and your family and like I thank you for your continued support. Please feel free to share my website with like minded family and friends <http://www.directaidinternational.org/> or connect with me on facebook

I hope all is well in your world

Peace

Jonathan