



Autumn

ikat

2005

Newsletter of Central Asia Institute

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ikat

Newsletter of
Central Asia Institute

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Ikatan is the extraordinary silk fabric woven throughout Central Asia. Each strand is individually dyed, then woven into stunning patterns, which are recognized from village to village. We have chosen "ikat" for our name because it symbolizes the strength, beauty and resilience of the people of Central Asia.

Our Mission

Central Asia Institute's mission is to promote and support community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in mountain regions of Central Asia.

Board of Directors

Julia Bergman
Greg Mortenson
Karen McCown
Abdul Jabbar

USA Staff

Greg Mortenson
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Kelli Taylor
Christiane Leitinger

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I Spy Design, Inc.
www.ispydesign.com

*Images courtesy of CAI,
unless otherwise noted.*

Cover Image: *Student from Babu Tengi School in Afghanistan.*



In memory of Dr. Jean Hoerni, CAI Co-Founder, 1924-1997

This issue dedicated to CAI friend Pete Schoening, 1927-2004

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Our Philosophy

Central Asia Institute (CAI) is a grass-roots organization whose philosophy has evolved from years of firsthand field experience. CAI's primary goal is to empower local people to be fully involved in every aspect of a project.

Our community partnerships are facilitated by village committees selected for their dedication, initiative and accountability. We take great care to cooperate with the various government, political and religious groups of this complex region.

Each project is locally initiated, implemented and managed in its entirety. We use innovative techniques to encourage people to take responsibility for their own vitality. The community matches CAI funds with equal amounts of local resources and labor to ensure the project's viability and long-term success. CAI's successful projects are a solid testimony to the strength of community-based initiatives.

The Regions We Serve



-  CAI Program Regions
-  Line of Control (LOC)
-  Capital City

Letter from Greg



~

Asalaam Alaikum, *(Peace Be With You)*

Greetings! Thank you again for your remarkable support and interest in Central Asia Institute, (CAI) that enables our mission to promote education and literacy, especially for girls, in remote regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia.

I recently returned from an extensive two month project field trip and it's an honor to report – that despite recent turmoil – CAI schools and community education initiatives are thriving. Over 22,000 schoolchildren, in the 53 schools CAI has established or serves, thank you for giving them hope to realize their dreams. Our Board Chairperson, Julia Bergman, along with three American volunteers, just returned from her fifth annual field trip to Pakistan, to promote our teacher training program – and is excited with the progress of our teachers and students.

In addition to our ongoing success in the field, we have made significant changes in our USA operations.

We have streamlined and downsized our operations staff from 6 FTE (Full Time Employee) to 3 FTE professional staff, Jennifer Sipes, Christiane Leitinger and Kelli Taylor, who are introduced later in this newsletter.

From a media perspective, the areas we serve continue to be filled with frightening stories of suicide bombers, opium, insurgencies and turmoil. From our perspective, it's a different story, of hope for a better world, one school and one child at a time.

We celebrate with you in this newsletter the difference you make in a big way. Thanks again for your contributions, optimism and prayers.

Regards,
Greg Mortenson
Executive Director

~
"Dare, Dream, Do"
Al Neuharth
Founder of USA Today,
and the Freedom Forum
(active CAI supporter)
~

Shakeela: Changing Minds With Education

by Greg Mortenson

Shakeela is the first educated girl of Hushe village, in the Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan. She is one of nine children born to Aslam, the Nurmadhar (village chief) and first educated man in the entire village.

For four decades, thousands of hikers and climbers had passed through Hushe, but it was only in 1998 that the first formal school and education was established in Hushe by Central Asia Institute.

Since Hushe School only goes up to 7th grade, Shakeela now attends High School in distant Khaphlu village. She is separated from her family, and lives in a spartan apartment – helped and protected by her brother Yakoub.

“People’s minds and hearts in Hushe are changing, and all the families want to send their daughters to school.



Shakeela
Photo by David Oliver Relin

The village elders who first opposed my education as a girl, now tell me that I was so brave to read so many books, and bring honor to my village,” says Shakeela.

Shakeela is an exceptional student, and has excelled in difficult circumstances. She started writing with a stick in the dirt, but now proudly uses an ‘English’ fountain

pen and proudly studies in the evening by the light of a Chinese kerosene lantern. She recently scored a perfect 100% mark in her math and Urdu exams, and even an 82% in physics.

“If God is willing, I’ll take my studies as far as possible and be a doctor someday”, says Shakeela, “and I am thankful there are kind Americans who help me realize my dreams.”

Shakeela’s inspirational story, along with dozens more, will be published in a book *Three Cups of Tea: One Mans Quest to Change The World, One School At A Time*, by author David Oliver Relin and Greg Mortenson, released by Viking / Penguin Publishers in March 2006.

Featured Project

Sitara (“Star”) School



Sitara School, June 2005

“Star Bright, Star Light,
First Star We See Tonight.”

Sarhad village is in the remote Wakhan Corridor, Badakshan province of NE Afghanistan. It is the last village on a dirt road, a 44-hour jeep ride from Kabul. During the harsh winters, snow blocks the road and Sarhad is only accessible by horseback or foot. The hardy Wakhi people live a basic existence in earthen huts, with no electricity, phone, TV, email or running water. For heating and fuel, they burn dried yak dung.

When we first visited Sarhad in 2002, the community asked for help to build the region’s first school. They had only one condition – that their school be of a special design. They envisioned a group of several circular classrooms, joined in the shape of a star (“sitara”). In the dirt, illiterate village elders drew out a prototype of nine connected adobe-style rooms (like the Pentagon). A professional

architect put their ideas on a computer, and a revolutionary new school design was hatched.

Craftsman and masons worked for 112 days, until the world’s first ‘Sitara school’ was complete in October, 2004. It is beautiful with a large skylight and hand-hewn beams. The students celebrate and thank you for Sitara, which brings light and hope to their lives!



Inside Sitara School



Greg Mortenson with
Sitara School Student

A word from our Supporters

Letters from two brothers:

"I think it is great that you are building schools for these uneducated people – especially for girls. I am happy to know that my money will be going to educate my generation of people and give jobs to the less fortunate in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

Tyler – Portsmouth, NH

"I believe that if we educate the women of Central Asia it will mean more education for everyone in that society. I have enclosed a donation that I earned mowing lawns this summer to help you build your schools."

Dylan – Portsmouth, NH

~

"We are never going to win the War on Terror with bombs, bullets, and bullying. The only way to win the War on Terror is to win hearts."

Jeff and Connie – Bloomington, IL

~

"Providing the gift of literacy is probably the most empowering gift a person can receive. I am proud that we can help CAI even if only in a small way."

Jim and Joyce – Roseville, MN

"I would like to donate five dollars of my allowance to you. To get things started out on the right foot I am sending ten dollars with this letter. Thank you for all your work."

Hope, 9 years old – Carpinteria, CA

~

"The photos you send of the children so eager to learn are powerful. I place them on my altar and leave them on my desk to remind me what my tithes are helping to create."

Kristine – Los Gatos, CA

~

"You are such an amazing and wonderful people. As a Muslim woman, born in America, I am showered with God's blessings unlike my sisters around the world. Muslim women come from a legacy of oppression and are always victims of fundamentalist ignorance. I cannot express enough my admiration and love for your organization."

Sufiya

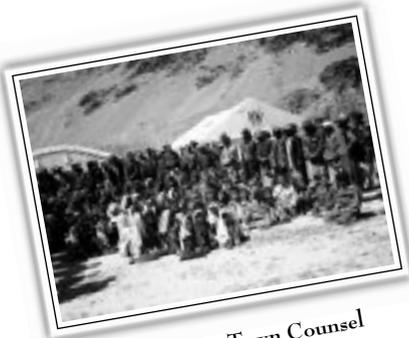
CAI Supporter Runs Sahara Marathon

In April 2005, Ben Dailey of Brooklyn, New York ran a grueling 150 mile Marathon Des Sables (MDS), over seven days through the Sahara Desert to raise over \$4,000 for Central Asia Institute. Ben says he ran the MDS (called the 'world's toughest foot race'), to "put significance beyond

the unnecessary misery I will heap upon myself, and help the children (of Afghanistan and Pakistan) who have a fierce desire to learn to read and write." THANKS BEN!

For more information visit:
<http://BenMDS2005.blogspot.com>.

Photos from the Field



Babu Tengri Town Counsel
Afghanistan



Jafar Abad Girls School
Pakistan



School Land Mine Chart
Afghanistan



Pashtun nomad design
Pakistan



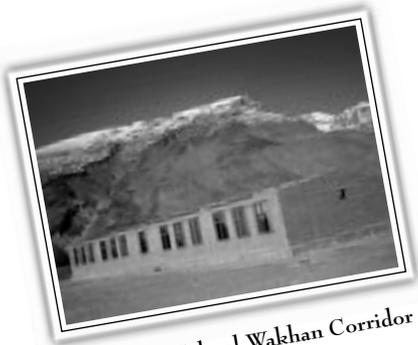
Baharak Tent School
Afghanistan



Lalander School Char Asiab Valley
Afghanistan



Gultori War Refugee Girls School
Pakistan



*Kali Panj School Wakhan Corridor
Afghanistan*



*Students on 2 hour walk
to CAI school - Afghanistan*



*Faizabad girls walk to school
Badakhshan, Afghanistan*



*Inauguration Biafo School, July 2005
Pakistan*



*CAI teacher, Parvin with student,
Nazia - Wargeant, Afghanistan*



*Karmang War Refugee School
Baltistan, Pakistan*

Highlights from the Field

by Greg Mortenson

Polio House

Hope for the future

Last fall, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF completed a successful immunization of six million Afghan children against polio. A UNICEF report also stated that only 3 new cases of polio were discovered in Afghanistan in 2004. www.unicef.org/media/media_23456.html.

However, in the Wakhan Corridor of NE Afghanistan where CAI projects are, we are aware of three new cases of polio in 2004 in remote villages. One village in particular, devastated by polio, is Wargeant village, near the Tajikistan border. Males afflicted with polio continue a fairly normal life, however females who have polio, are sequestered in a "Polio House" and have little opportunity for a normal life. The Wargeant polio house is in appalling condition, with no windows, covered with soot and

filled with yak-dung smoke (the cheapest source of fuel). The women have no water access, and are malnourished and unkempt. Our inspiring Wargeant school teacher, Parvin, proposed that CAI build a new, well ventilated polio house (with windows and light) with an attached women's vocational center, where the 'polio-women' can live and can also earn a livelihood with sewing, embroidery and knitting materials.

With your support, the Wargeant villagers began to build a new women's polio house in June. We will be pleased to give you an update of the new Wargeant 'Polio House' in our holiday 2005 newsletter.

World Record Commute

CAI heros on foot

In many remote villages where CAI works, education is a privilege, not a right. School-children (as young as five years old) walk an hour or two to school and back every day. They often walk over difficult mountain trails or wade through streams. On any given day, there might be rain, dust-storms, sleet or snow. In the winter, many of our school-children place straw in their cheap Chinese rubber boots to keep their sock-less feet warm. This is in stark contrast to USA, where most children have the right to take a bus to get an education, if they live more than one mile from school.

(Story continued on page 11)



Women's Polio House
Wargeant, Afghanistan



In June, when I was driving on a remote road in Afghanistan to visit Babu-Tengi village, I stopped to talk to four children between the ages of six and ten walking down the road in the middle of nowhere. They told me they were from Uzet village, and walk 3½ hours each way to attend school in Babu Tengi (that means seven hours roundtrip).



Uzet Village children walk 7 hours daily to attend school

Seeing them there so proud and eager to walk seven hours daily to attend school, I felt humbled. It is also a travesty that the global community has neglected the education of over 140 million children. We hope that through the example of the Afghan children's daily seven hour commute on foot to school, we can all appreciate the value of education and what some brave students will do for the privilege of attending school.

Opium

How about education as a solution?

In the last four years, Afghanistan has become the world's principal supplier of opium, and its heroin by-product. In 2004, Afghanistan produced 4,600 tons of opium, about 78% of the world's opium production. The income generated from opium in Afghanistan was over \$2 billion, almost equal to the country's combined aid money. The US government allocated over \$174 million to help eradicate opium in Afghanistan this year.

Unfortunately, most of these funds are or have been lost in administrative bureaucracy and ineffective large scale projects that have little impact on local farmers. It only takes approximately \$1.00 per month to educate a student in Afghanistan. In our talks with dozens of officials, community leaders, and village elders, they all advocate that education is the number one priority in a long term solution to provide alternatives to opium production.



Opium field - May 2005
Kesham, Afghanistan

Stones to School

by Greg Mortenson

Baharak Community School

Badakhshan Province, Afghanistan

Three years ago, on a visit to the remote Badakhshan province of NE Afghanistan, I first met Commandhan (commander) Sardhar Khan. Although Khan is a powerful tribal leader and respected mujahadeen (freedom fighter), who fought fiercely against the Soviets and Taliban, he is a simple man who lives in a spartan house. He prefers to

garden and read Persian poetry, rather than fight wars. But most of all, he is keenly interested in the education, welfare and future of the local children.

Badakhshan is located in the remote Hindu-Kush and Pamir mountain ranges. It receives little support, if any at all, even after

9/11. The province has one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates (65 deaths per 1,000 live births!), a literacy rate of less than 10%, few doctors, little medicine, and mostly a desperate need for schools and education.

We met on his office rooftop, overlooking the rugged Hindu-Kush mountains. Khan told me that he

and the town elders had just completed Juma (Friday) prayers, where they had lamented and prayed for an answer to the lack of schools and education.

He then pointed up to the barren mountains covered with boulders, and said, "Each one of those stones is a Shaheed (mujahadeen martyr), now it is our duty to turn those stones into schools, so that their sacrifice is not in vain. May God help us."



**Baharak Stones to School
Afghanistan**

With a generous donation of a St. Louis supporter, Birch Mullins, and many others, Sardhar Khan's dream came true in May 2005 with the completion of a brand new school (see photo).

On Friday, May 13th, riots erupted in Afghanistan, after alleged *Newsweek*

reports of a Koran thrown in the toilet at Guantanamo Bay prison. In Baharak mosque, two despot Mullahs triggered off violent demonstrations after Juma (Friday) prayers and incited 1,200 rioters to destroy, and burn all international NGO operations offices in Baharak bazaar (main street). The rioters destroyed buildings, two dozen vehicles, computers, and



Stones to School building in progress

equipment causing over \$1,200,000 in damage (USA equivalent \$60 million). Four people were killed and over fifty injured. At the end of the road, the rioters reached CAI's brand new "Stones to School" which had just been completed a week earlier. Shiny new window panes and fresh paint glimmered in the sunset. There, a remarkable, spontaneous event occurred.

Even though they were risking their lives and reputations, a few local elders confronted the mob and said, "This is our school, for our children; let no man touch it, even with one stone."

Rather than throw stones, burn and destroy their school, the mob quieted and said, "Yes, this is truly OUR school for OUR children, this is not a kafir – non-believer – project, and peacefully walked away.

There is an important lesson to learn from the happenings of that violent May 13th day, when Baharak school was spared from destruction. It is imperative that communities be empowered to initiate, implement and manage projects in their entirety. Literacy disempowers despot Mullah, who control societies impoverished and held captive by illiteracy.

This fall, brave young girls and boys will walk down the path to Baharak school, to know the power of education and literacy and honor the sacrifice their Shaheed fathers, brothers, and sons made – as "Stones to School" becomes a reality.

Thank you (Shukur) to all!



1,462 cement bags (weighing 40 kg. each) were transported 560 miles from Pakistan to build Baharak's Stones to School.

Pennies for Peace

by Jennifer Sipes



Our Pennies for Peace Program (P4P), started a decade ago, educates American children about the world beyond their experience and how they can make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time.

The best hope for a peaceful and prosperous world lies in the education of all the world's children. Through cross-cultural understanding and a solution-oriented approach, Pennies for Peace encourages American children, ultimately our future leaders, to be active participants in the creation of global peace.

One penny, 1% of a dollar, is symbolic of the '1% of Gross Domestic Product' (GDP) goal set by the United Nations. The goal was for wealthy countries to give foreign aid to impoverished nations each year.

Pennies for Peace teaches children the rewards of sharing and working together to bring hope and education opportunities to children in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A penny in the United States is virtually worthless, but overseas a penny buys a pencil and opens the door to literacy.

A 5th grade education for girls improves not only the basic indices of health for her and her family, she will also spread the value of education within her community. Literacy, for both boys and girls, provides better economic opportunities in the future and neutralizes the power of despot mullahs and other extremists.

Two anonymous supporters will match P4P donations up to the first \$5,000 beginning this fall.

For more information, please visit [***www.penniesforpeace.org***](http://www.penniesforpeace.org)



A big thanks from
Khanday school girls - Pakistan

*CAI welcomes Christiane
Leitinger, our new P4P Director
(see page 17).*



P4P Highlights



Girls on the Run of the
Wood River Valley

~
Thanks to the
(over) 160 schools
in 45 states that
participated in our
Pennies for Peace
Program in 2004!
~

“Enclosed is a donation raised from spare change (Pennies for Peace) that our organization collected. We are Girls on the Run of the Wood River Valley whose mission is to educate and prepare girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. The girls worked hard, including a bake sale and 5K run. I am so touched by what the Central Asia Institute is doing and am proud to know our girls are able to touch and help give opportunity to girls across the world. Thank You!”

Shari – Ketchum, ID

“We’re growing up...we hope this contribution helps your schools to keep growing up too! Thanks for all your good work and dedication.”

*Freedom Valley Girl Scout Troop
#241, West Chester, PA*



Freedom Valley Girl Scout
Troop #241



Our new Operations Director



Jennifer Sipes ***Operations Director***

As of April, 2005, we are very excited and honored to have a new and experienced Operations Director, Jennifer Sipes, to manage Central Asia Institute. Jennifer comes with high qualifications and has extensive experience in office management and administration from her previous position as Operations Manager at Anderson ZurMuehlen & Co., P.C.

Jennifer grew up in the rural town of Choteau, Montana. She earned her bachelors degree in Business Management from Montana State University and resides in Belgrade with her husband, Russell. She is active in community programs, including serving as the Coordinator of the Leadership Bozeman Program through the Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce.

In the few months she has been with CAI, Jennifer has filled an important role to create a level of efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism that ensures CAI's ongoing success.

In Jennifer's own words, "The communities and tens of thousands of children we serve rely on us for support and encouragement. It is critical we provide the necessary means for education to occur in these remote areas, and also to provide exceptional service and accountability to our contributors. I am very excited to be a part of the dynamic growth of CAI and look forward to building relationships with our supporters!"



**"We must make our
top priority for all
stakeholders to bring
education, and knowl-
edge to every child,
including girls, to get
the best possible
start in life".**

Parvez Musharraf
President of Pakistan



Spotlight...CAI Staff



Kelli Taylor
Database Manager

Kelli Taylor has been CAI's database manager since August 2004. She grew up in rural Harvey, North Dakota. Later she served 4 years in the U.S. Army, where she was an Intelligence Analyst on Afghanistan and Iraq. While stationed in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, her studies sparked an interest in the Islamic culture and the people. Her expertise provides a valuable perspective into CAI's strategic growth and donor relations.

She currently resides in Belgrade with her husband Zack, and is pursuing a degree in Business Finance at Montana State University. We are excited and honored to have a person of Kelli's caliber and experience as part of our team.



Christiane Leitinger
Pennies for Peace Director

We welcome our new P4P Director, Christiane Leitinger. With her enthusiasm and extensive education background, she provides valuable expertise to the future success of Pennies for Peace.

Christiane, a passionate CAI volunteer and advocate for a decade, helps educate tens of thousands of children about P4P. She will guide P4P into a 509(a)3 non-profit organization, affiliated with CAI.

Christiane is a Montessori educator who has worked with diverse cultural and economic populations in the Denver area for 15 years. She has a Bachelor's Degree from Grinnell College, and Master's Degree in Education from Loyola College. Christiane is married to Charley Shimansky, Executive Director of the Colorado Association of Nonprofit Organizations, and the mother of two daughters.

~
"Education, especially for girls,
will change the world".

*Dr. Sima Samar, Minister of
Women's Affairs Afghanistan*

~

Accountant Introduction



~

Stefani Freese ***Certified Public Accountant***

Stefani Freese is an independent CPA and auditor in public accounting with the Bozeman, Montana firm of Anderson ZurMuehlen & Co., P.C. (AZ & Company). She has two decades of experience auditing and consulting with nonprofit organizations.

Central Asia Institute first hired AZ & Company to audit the organization for the fiscal year 2003. A year later, CAI contracted them to design and implement a system of strong internal controls and monitoring.

At the present time, AZ & Company performs the following tasks:

1. Prepare CAI's monthly and quarterly financial statements.
2. Review and verify monthly bank reconciliations.
3. Ensure CAI complies with the budget set by the Board of Directors.
4. Evaluate monthly bookkeeping, payroll, and accounts payable.
5. Consult on cash flow projections and investment policies.
6. Monitor and ensure compliance of federal and state reporting regulations.
7. Prepare a draft of the annual budget for approval.
8. Prepare the annual IRS 990 financial information statement.

Stefani has helped CAI establish a strong internal control system for financial management. We are now working on procedures to evaluate overseas financials, reports, and audits. We thank Stefani for building a strong framework to support our mission.

As a professional CPA, and mother of two sons, Stefani understands and greatly values CAI's mission to educate children.

~

"Central Asia Institute shows how fresh alternatives to US foreign aid can reach the ground faster and achieve results at a fraction of the cost of traditional programs."

Honorable Mary Bono
US Congress (R - Cali.)

~

Your Support in Action

Pakistan

- 45 schools built or significantly supported
- 220 + teachers fully or partially supported
- Teacher training workshops
- School library projects
- 7,099 students, including 3,519 girls
- Computer and typing center
- Maternal healthcare scholarships
- 20 + drinking water projects

Afghanistan

- 5 schools built (+ 3 more in 2005), several more schools supported
- 300 + teachers fully or partially supported
- 7,915 students, including 5,879 girls

Mongolia

- Mobile rural health education

Kyrgystan

- Teacher training scholarship



Sitara School - Afghanistan

~

A gift today goes a long way

- \$20 One student's school supplies for one year
- \$50 One treadle sewing machine and supplies
- \$100 Maternal healthcare supplies for one year
- \$300 One advanced student's annual scholarship
- \$600 One teacher's annual salary
- \$35,000 One school building and support for 3-5 years

~

A Special Request: to build and fund a fifty-plus room girls' high school with over 2,400 female students in Faizabad, Badakshan province, Afghanistan. The cost is \$260,000, with an additional \$24,000 annual commitment for five years for ongoing support. To make this possible in 2006, we need your support now!

ikat

Newsletter of
Central Asia Institute

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Go to the people,
live with them.
Learn from them.

Love them.

Start with what they know.
Build with what they have.
But with the best leaders,
when the work is done,
the task is accomplished.
The people would then say,
“We have done this ourselves.”

Written by Lao Tsu

~



Lalander Schoolgirls
Afghanistan



Daudat - Polio Victim & CAI Student
Wargeant, Afghanistan

~



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