

NORTHERN AREAS, CONVERSATIONS
Selected Parts of Field Notes of three AKDN Consultancies

By
Arif Hasan

NORAD Funded Education Programme of the AKDN in the Northern Areas

Selected Parts of Consultancy Field Notes
(September 01, 2003)

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19 August 2003:

- Arrived Islamabad from Karachi at 1810 hours
- Checked in at Serena
- Dinner with Ahmed Saeed

20 August 2003:

- Islamabad-Gilgit by helicopter
- Arrived Gilgit at 1320 hours
- Meeting with Shah Raees and Hurmat Khan at 1500 hours

Shah Raees is a consultant for the SHSBP. However, from 1995 to 1998 he was a full time staff member of the AKESP. He worked as a community motivator. Currently, he is a lecturer at the Gilgit University, which is really the upgraded Gilgit Degree College. The College has given him permission to work as a consultant. He studied sociology at the University of Karachi from where he did his Masters in 1995. While in Karachi he involved himself in student's welfare work. He is 34 years old.

Hurmat Khan was in class 7 when he joined the army. He did his B.Ed from the army and in 1988 he joined the AKESP and worked his way up to become a manager. In 1998 he got a Master's degree in Education from the Aga Khan University. They both say that Karachi changed their lives by opening up their minds.

The NORAD Programme consisted of:

1. Construction of 42 classrooms
2. Six coaching centres to provide middle/high school education to 175-200 girl students where this facility is not available.
3. Scholarship to 10 girl students per year to receive higher education in down country institutions leading to the development of a high quality teaching staff.
4. Practical training to over 200 local skilled labour and artisans in modern building and construction techniques.

5. Enhanced cooperation/interaction between communities involved in programme activities.

Conversation with Shah Raees and Hurmat Khan

The Programme identifies needs and determines where and how many classrooms are needed. The details then sent to the Northern Area Education Board (NAEB). Final decision on these issues is taken in Karachi.

Dialogues are then held with the communities:

- First dialogue is to explain the Programme.
- Second dialogue is to follow up on the first dialogue and to make certain that 70 per cent households are represented in the dialogue.
- Third dialogue a School Construction Committee (SCC) is formed and Terms of Partnership (TOP) are signed.

Some times four dialogues are required.

Coaching Centres began in the 1990s. They are located in schools that could not develop beyond the primary. These schools, after school hours, prepare students to take middle or matric examinations privately. Subjects taught were Urdu, Mathematics, Science and English. In some cases the coaching centres also hired buildings. If teaching staff was not available, they hired part time government teachers. Through the matching grant system, many of these coaching centres became a part of the schools.

For turning coaching centres into schools, AKES gives salary for three teachers for middle schools and for five teachers for high schools plus stationary, teaching materials and teachers training. Fifty per cent of the trainees at the training are from government schools.

Before there were no women teachers. Now Nagar, for instance, has 21 coaching centres that have 42 men and 51 women teachers. Minimum education required for teaching – intermediate. For women to get these qualifications was difficult, it was done through the AIOU (through the coaching centres?) Norwegian centres have become community based schools.

Female Human Resource Development (FHRD): After doing their matric women did not have the possibility of higher education. A criteria was developed for choosing women who wanted to study further so as to send them to study in educational institutions outside of the NA. Their admission was arranged and so was their transport to and from their new institutions. Their parents visits were also arranged by the AKESP along with meals during the journey and the meetings with their daughters. This was exclusively a NORAD programme. The target was higher education for 200 girls but the number now exceeds 500.

Results are that 37 per cent of all teachers in the AKES supported schools are now women. The AKES director of the Regional Education Board, Hunza is also a woman and she has gone to UK on scholarship. Three out of eleven community development officers are women. One Hunza academy teacher is doing a Ph.D at Aga Khan University and two teachers have done their Masters' from England. All these women are the product of the Community Based Schools. Problems however exist. There are 17 high schools and they require Science and English teachers.

21 August 2003:

0930 hours: Oshkandas

Visited the Self Help School in Oshkandas. The School began as a two-room DJ School in 1958. There was only one teacher then and she had only passed her middle school. The present building was built in 1986 and became a high school in 1993.

The school is constructed in hollow block walls with a prefab roof which used to leak to such an extent that classes could not be held during the rains. In addition, the skylights in the classrooms were fixed and as such the classroom became unbearably hot in summer and unbearably cold in winter.

Changes were made to the skylights so that they could let in air and the skylight roof was changed from transparent glass to translucent fibre glass. The roof was water proofed by bitumen and a plastic sheet was stuck over the bitumen spread. Nine to twelve inches on earth was added over the plastic sheet for insulation. These rectifications have improved environmental conditions considerably.

Three classrooms were constructed in 1993 with a Norwegian grant. They house the high school classes. They are constructed in the same technology as the rest of the school but with openable skylights and proper water proofing and insulation for the roof. These three classrooms that can accommodate 120 students are an integral part of the school design. However, next to the school an additional two classrooms have been constructed with EU funds with a provision to build a first floor. This is the Sikandar Ajam (he is an architect from Islamabad) design and the external walls are of stone. The teacher and students in one of the classrooms say that they are cooler in summer than the classrooms in the main school buildings. They cannot say whether they are warmer in winter since they still have to spend a winter in them.

Qudratulla Beg is the headmaster of the School. He is from Danyore where he was a teacher. We met in his room. The meeting was also attended by Ghulam Mohammad and Chand Bibi. Ghulam Mohammad is a PT teacher in a government school. He had worked as a volunteer on the old DJ school building and is a member of the SCC which has had the EU funded classrooms built. Chand Bibi is also a member of the SCC (which has now converted itself into a VEC). She did her Matric from this school in 1992.

It was then a middle school but the school did have coaching classes for girls who wished to do Matric privately.

The school has 14 regular teachers. Of these eight are females of which five have studied in this school. After matriculation they did their intermediate privately from the federal board and one has done her graduation from the AIOU.

All three community teachers are women. One has done her MSc from the Kashmir University, the other an FSc. and BA from the AIOU and the third an FSc from the Karachi Board.

We met with the third community teacher. She has been a teacher for the last three years. She studied till class 7 from this school and then did her matric from the Aga Khan Academy Hunza. Her parents paid for her education there. She spent three and a half years in Karachi for the FSc. Her bother was in Karachi then and he paid for her stay and education. She now wishes to get a regular job, preferably in a government school and is willing to be posted anywhere in the NA. She will just move, she says, to wherever with her two children. Her husband lives in Karachi and he can always visit her wherever she is. She also wishes to do a BA from the AIOU. She feels that the AIOU courses are excellent but frequent electricity failures make it difficult sometimes to follow them.

Ghulam Mohammad is dead against the design of the school and its construction technology. He feels that the design should have been around a courtyard. It would have saved space, provided space for expansion on the first floor and teachers could do better *nigrani* of the students as there would be only one entrance. He is also against concrete blocks on the external walls since they let in heat and cold and prefers stone. He is also against concrete roof and prefers GI sheet with straw insulation. He feels the GI sheet option is warmer and lighter.

All feel that without the three Norwegian financed classrooms the high school could not have been formalized. However, they feel that they too need support for scholarship for girls to study in other down country institutions and they also need the matching grant scheme. Both these have been denied to them for they are only for the "backward" areas and they are considered developed although they have a majority of very poor people. The priority of the VEC is a library and a college.

1130 hours: Mohammadabad School

The headmaster's name is Ameer Ali. He has been the headmaster since 1998 and is from Danyore. We meet in his room where three VEC members are also present. They are Piar Ali, who is a VEC member for the last two years and did his Matric from the local government school; Nahida, a VEC member for the last three years and did her Matric from the DJ School in Hunza; and Ghulam Mustafa who is a recent VEC member and has done a BSc from the Karakoram University and was a teacher in this school from 2000-2002.

Mohammadabad is a recent settlement. People came and settled here after the kool brought water for agriculture to this region. It has a population of about 3,500. It has a government primary school, one for girls and a SAP primary school. In addition, it has a private primary school.

The school consists of five blocks. Three on a higher platform and two at a lower level. The centre block at the higher level is the R&D school built of stone with GI sheet roofing, plywood beams and plywood ceilings. Two identical blocks have been added with Norwegian funds (in 1996) on either side of it and are linked with a pavement. Each unit has three classrooms.

One the blocks below is of the same technology but has two classrooms built with an EU grant in 1998 and next to it the community with its own funds has built an additional two rooms.

We discuss the design. The meeting participants feel that there should have been a proper design for the whole school. Just adding the prototype at the site has consumed too much space. They need more classrooms but there is no space. They feel that the school should have been designed as a double storey affair to save land. However, they are happy with the technology. The rooms are well insulated and the roofs do not leak. They also feel that the stone walls should have been plastered and white washed. It would give more light to the classrooms. However, the stone surface is a permanent finish and requires no maintenance. They agree that this is an advantage.

During the meeting Shareefulla Khan joined us. He was the secretary of the SCC that built the R&D school and the Norwegian funded extensions. He and his colleagues went to the R&D workshop in 1990 and they preferred the stone, plywood beam, GI sheet technology. They feel that they made the right choice and if they had been allowed to build it themselves, they would have saved at least 25 per cent of the cost. We discussed this but they could not explain how they would have done it.

Shareefulla also says that the wall technology of the schools, including items for earthquake resistance, has been copied for domestic and commercial buildings in the village but the roof technology has not because it requires properly sized timber components which are expensive. People usually use whatever timber they can lay their hands on for the roof and also cut and use their 'sufaida' trees. Also people need flat roofs for drying fruits and vegetables which GI sheets cannot provide.

We discuss educated women and marriage. The general consensus is that educated women find it difficult to get married. Education till matric is alright but after a girl has done her FA or BA she is too old to get married. Also, she wants an educated man and by that time they are already married. Then boys are afraid to marry women more educated than them.

1600 hours: Rahmat Ali at the AKES Office

Rahmat Ali also had a number of observations on technology. Some communities preferred concrete blocks to stone since they thought this was progressive and modern. The GI sheet roof with plywood beams as proposed by the R&D saves time in construction and is themally better. However, the plywood beam gave way at the Astore School because of snow load. This, in my opinion, was undoubtedly because the slope of the roof was insufficient to push off the snow. It is necessary to establish a rule of thumb to determine roof slopes in relation to the amount of snowfall.

Communities want double storey schools. They save land. However, the EU feels that double storey buildings destroy the natural environment. There is a conflict of perceptions here. Communities are also asking for the ground floor roof in concrete and the first floor one in GI.

BACIP technology is now also being used for school buildings. Non-AKDN schools are being built in Gulkin and Passu using this technology. The one in Gartinz has already been built and its insulation is excellent and so it is comfortable temperature-wise throughout the year. The HB will also use BACIP technology for the proposed EU funded classrooms. BACIP technology has also been used for Chapoorson Health Centre.

The Construction Skills Development Initiative (CSDI) was begun in 1998 for training artisans. The Mobile Training Course (MTC) was started earlier. The MTC has so far imparted general awareness to 3,500 persons and trained about 300 artisans. Both courses now provide training in BACIP technology also.

Due to awareness raising, training and participating in the development process, communities take their own decisions and openly disagree with the HB. They also have the technical expertise now. They easily follow material and labour schedules and sometimes they also raise funds themselves and ask for a design. However, their main weaknesses are time and money management.

Rahmat Ali feels that a new R&D is required to establish a thermal criteria, fulfil it with lower costs, settle conflicting perceptions regarding the effect of buildings on the natural environment and the pros and cons of using timber.

I also feel that such an R&D is required more so because the building of roads in the NA will bring down the cost of non-local materials considerably.

22 August 2003:

0830 hours: Left for the Gizar Valley with Shah Raees and Khuda Bux.

1000 hours: Arrived at the government primary school in Geech. It was empty except for Gul Saeeda, the person who got a Norwegian funded scholarship under the FHRD programme. It was Friday and the students were off.

Gul Saeeda's father is a farmer. He is one of the biggest landowners of the area. In addition, he made a lot of money buying and selling land and animals. He is old now and loses money in buying and selling transactions and so his children try to persuade him not to do this work. He had done his Matric from Shah Karim Hostel in Gilgit and eventually became a teacher before he went into business. However, Gul Saeeda's mother is completely uneducated.

Gul Saeeda has six brothers and five sisters. She comes somewhere in the middle. Her three elder brothers have done their graduation or are in the process of doing it in Karachi. A younger brother is doing his inter, also in Karachi. One of the two younger brothers is in class 9 at the government school at Sherquila and the other one is in class 4 at Gul Saeeda's school. Her two elder sisters did their Matric (through coaching centres) and are now married. One smaller sister is in class 9 and the youngest does not study as she has to look after her mother who has been very ill.

Gul Saeeda's father was very keen to get his boys to study and he had the money to send them to Karachi for education. However, he did not believe that girls should study after their matric but Gul Saeeda proved to be an exception.

Gul Saeeda studied till class 7 at the DJ School in Geech where she teaches. She then got admitted to the Aga Khan Academy at Hunza and did her matriculation from there. Her father agreed to let her go and also paid for her education there only because she always stood first – otherwise she would never have gone. She stayed at the Academy for three years and passed out in 1992 with 64 per cent marks. She was lost at the Academy but after sometime made friends and learnt to become independent. At home everyone was dependent on each other and ones only links were with member of the extended family.

Because of her good percentage she got a scholarship under the FHRD programme and she got admission at the Zubaida Girls College in Hyderabad. Again, her father would have never let her go if the scholarship was not there and if her uncle (mother's brother) had not forced him.

She did her inter in pre-medical because she wanted to be a doctor like her *khala* who works in Singal but she could not get the required grade. So she stayed on in Hyderabad to do her BSc which she completed in 1997 and then returned to Geech and became a teacher at the Geech coaching centre. She applied both for an AKDN and government teaching job, was accepted by both and opted to work for the government as she feels that a government job is more prestigious and stable. The AKES she feels is biased in favour of Hunzaites!

She stayed away eight years in all. During short holidays she visited Karachi and during the long holidays she came home. Staying in Hyderabad Dildar Shah. In addition, there is Mohammad Ayub who has been the headmaster for the last 12 years.

The headmaster thanked us formally for our visit and also thanked the AKES donors. Because of them, he felt, that behaviour patterns had improved and greater social and environmental awareness had come to the NA.

The VEC members and the teachers discussed the school design and construction. In their opinion the design of the school is all wrong. The first building is in a depression and the toilet block dominates it. The school should be designed in a U-shape with all the rooms together. With such a design a school is easier to manage, does not need a boundary wall, saves space, provides a playground. The government schools that are designed like this are better.

The VEC is a very active and enthusiastic one. It collects fees from defaulters; it decides who cannot pay fees and for such students it raises funds from donations; it sorts out teachers problems and involves parents in monitoring the school. It has eight members of which two are women.

The *mistries* who worked on the school were all locals and were already trained when they began work. However, they did attend some training, the nature of which is unclear to the VEC.

1400 hours: Arrived in Hatoon

The school was closed. There was nobody there. We were joined by Khursheed Shah VEC secretary and *chowkidar* Mat Jan who has been a *chowkidar* since the school began.

1620 hours: Singal High School

We came to visit a teacher who had received a FHRD scholarship. The school itself has no NORAD input. She was away in Gilgit so we chatted with Hyat Din, the headmaster and Sahib Jehan, the headmistress.

The school is a concrete wall and roof affair and was built in 1992. It used to leak and was unbearably hot in summer and cold in winter. To stop leakage it was given a GI sheet roof over its concrete one and the skylights were changed. This has improved insulation but the headmaster and mistress are not happy.

They prefer stone on the external walls and GI sheet and plywood roofs. They say that they provide better insulation. You only have to light a fire once and the heat stays in. In the concrete schools you need a fire all the time.

Shaiba Jan did her BA privately in 1992 and her BEd from Gilgit. She complains that because of the bad design she cannot look out of her room, the noise of the classrooms and verandahs filters in and the dust does not find an outlet. Serious objections.

We talked of the repercussions of women's education. She says gender relations are in a state of confusion (well put). Men and women are not used to working together and both when educated find it difficult to marry someone their parents choose. Boys do badly in examinations and girls excel so they get all the jobs. She feels that something needs to be done for the boys.

23 August 2003:

Left Gilgit at 0830 hours and arrived at Chalt Pine at 1030 hours. There are about 300 households in Chalt Pine. We were conducted to a stone building built by the government through the SAP programme. The classrooms were in a row with a verandah in front.

and visiting Karachi changed her world view, gave her confidence in forming and articulating her views and brought her into contact with "advanced" people.

She is unmarried. After education she feels that a woman gets a right to decide who to marry. There are more jobs now for educated women than for educated men and so women have a better chance to develop. She says that there are now a number of families who live off women's incomes and the number is increasing.

1210 hours: Arrive in Hassis

The VEC is in a meeting with the REB chairman. So we wait for the meeting to finish and explore the school. Arshad Ali a community teacher shows us around. He has done his BCom from Karachi. He studied at the DJ School till class 3, did his matric from Bubar and his inter from Karachi.

We are then called into one of the classrooms. There are a lot of persons in the room. We introduce ourselves. There are seven VEC members (of which two are women), three male teachers, two female teachers and the chairman of the Punial Regional Education Board (REB),

We met the teachers and the VEC members in the staff room of the SAP school. Ali Raza is the government teacher at Askundas and is the coaching centre in-charge. He graduated from Karachi and has a B.Ed from Lahore. Abdulla Khan is the SAP school in-charge and Zammarad Ali who gave three *kanals* of land for the school was also present. Two members of the PTA and four teachers also attended the meeting.

We were informed that when these young men were students there were no girl students at all. The AKES school had two government teachers. After the girls did their primary they sat at home since they could not study any further. An education committee was formed and three male teachers and two females agreed to make a coaching centre at the AKES school for classes 6 and 7. All this happened in June 1997. Thirty girl students enrolled. This meant very little salaries but the group of five persevered. The parents also wanted this coaching centre although there was opposition to men teaching girls.

There are now 120 students in classes 6 to 10. Since 1997 at least four students per year have done their matric. So there are now about 30 matriculate women in Chalt Pine. One woman is doing her graduation from AIOU. Five to six are doing their Inter from the Chalt College. All the male teachers have been educated at Karachi. The meeting felt that Karachi has been a source of inspiration and trained manpower.

The meeting discussed the advantages of female education. They agreed that they had "come out from the dark to the light". They had cleaner homes, politer kids, better relations between people and more enlightened conversation and discussion.

But they have problems. Qualified teachers are expensive and the non-qualified are bad. They want grants for teachers. Their coaching centre they say is better than government schools. Its success rate is 65 per cent whereas that of government is 13 per cent. This is in spite of the fact that they have no laboratories. Teacher's training and teaching kits have helped them enormously. They would prefer government assistance but in its present condition government provided education is useless (*naqis*).

We visited the classrooms and met the students and teachers. The girls were extremely timid, unlike school girls in Hunza and Ghizer. One of the teachers, Zehra, had been educated at the school and was of the opinion that without this coaching centre there would have been no education for girls beyond the primary. No education beyond the primary means no women teachers and no professional working women. She feels that the sacrifices they (the initiators of the Centre) made were worth it.

1300 hours: Chalt Bala

We left Chalt Pine in search of Zehra Jabeen, one of the students who had received a NORAD scholarship. She now teaches at the Care Nagar School. We finally located her at the school and had a meeting with her. The Care Nagar School is a single storey L-shape building with classrooms in a row and a verandah in front of them. It is an English medium school but the teachers do not seem to be very confident in conversing in English. I met the principal and the teachers. I wonder how they can teach in English. More emphasis I feel should be given in teaching English as a language. The other

subjects should be in Urdu but they should use the English terminology, both for Science and Arts subjects.

Zehra Jabeen's father is a shopkeeper and he studied till class 5 or 6. Mother teaches Quran privately but is otherwise uneducated. She has four sisters, two of which have done their FA and one brother who is studying in class 5. Her father wanted her to study.

She did her primary education privately and her matric in 1997 through tuitions from tutors at the coaching centre or at the Care Nagar School. After that she taught at the Care Nagar School for one year at the primary level and during that time the AKES field staff asked her why she has not continued her studies. Through the scholarship provided by the AKES she went to Gilgit Public College to do her pre-medical FSc. She stayed with her relations whom she has visited earlier and as such she knew Gilgit well. She chose the pre-medical course since she had a strong desire to be a doctor.

Studying in Gilgit changed her life. She studied with girls from Kabul, Punjab, Hunza and other down country places who were 'very advanced'. It was a new world of thinking and behaving that opened before her. It intimidated her in the beginning but gave her confidence later. It will change the life of her children and her home. She would never had gone to Gilgit without the NORAD scholarship. I feel that if a counselling process for scholarship holders is put in place it might be possible to prevent students for making the wrong choice in subjects.

1300 hours: Jafferabad

Arrived at the AKES built school at Jafferabad. Jafferabad has a population of 250 to 300 households. The school has four rooms. In the morning it is a primary school and in the afternoon it is a coaching centre.

We held a meeting with Bakhtawar Shah who is the chairman of the school management committee and the school founder; Shabbir Hussain who is the coaching centre in-charge, was educated at SM Science College Karachi and has been a government teacher at the high school in Nilt; and Shaikh Muhammad Haneef who is the religious leader at the Imambara.

The coaching centre began in 1998 at the AKES school. The coaching centre was begun because there were no middle and high government schools for girls in 1998. The 'progressive' members of the community realized that because of an absence of women education they could not compete with Hunza. They were worried as they had been "left behind". Also, their women could not speak Urdu and as such could not communicate with doctors regarding their illness. This was a serious problem. They did not know of the world outside their home, they could not understand the news on the radio.

The coaching centre was begun by two female teachers. Both had Karachi links. Tahira Saba was born in Karachi since her parents migrated there. They came back to Jafferabad and she was one of the founders. The other was Mehrab Kiyani who still teaches at the Centre. The nature of her Karachi links could not be defined properly. However, there is consensus that Karachi and these two women have been a major contributor to a change in perceptions regarding women's education.

The participants of the meeting say that there are many problems that they face at the centre. The school has no boundary wall and so girls and their parents have a sense of insecurity. The classrooms are not enough and there is no laboratory. There is a need for books. Many students cannot acquire them as they are expensive and this makes a number of girls leave education. A library creates a culture of learning and an environment for other than subject based education. There is no library. In addition, the centre's staff can only give three hours a day to teaching and this is simply not enough. They get tired teaching all day. None of the persons present had any complaints regarding the building. They were thankful to the AKES for having provided them with the school.

There were many objections to girls education when the coaching centre was being set up. Religious leaders objected and pointed out to the villagers that their girls would be corrupted and that it was improper that men would be teaching young girls. However, support was given to the promoters of female education by a few religious leaders such as Shaikh Muhammad Haneef. I asked him why he had supported women's education. He replied that this was his religious duty because every Muslim man and woman has to acquire *Ilm*. Also, if the male teachers are respectable there is nothing wrong with women being taught by them. Shaikh Muhammad Haneef says that there are divisions among the imams on this issue but time is on the side of the progressives. Every girl who does her matric and goes beyond it is making the retrogressive elements fade into the background.

1415 hours: Ghulmit

We arrived in Ghulmit and went searching for Gul Nijaat and Mariam, two girls who got a NORAD scholarship. We finally located them at the government school where they teach in the afternoon at the coaching centre.

Gul Nijaat and Mariam are sisters. Their father and mother were uneducated and the father got a job at the Wah Factory near Rawalpindi. Both Mariam and Nijaat were born there. Nijaat was in class 7 and Mariam in class 6 when they shifted back to Ghulmit. Before that they used to come to Ghulmit for their holidays. They have four brothers, younger than them, all studying at government schools in the village. At Wah, the social environment in which they grew up was very different from that of Ghulmit. It was freer and more open. There were much less restrictions on women. It was difficult for the sisters to adjust to the conditions that they encountered on their return to their native village. However, they claim that they have adjusted now although, from the manner in which they speak, I do not think that this is true. The girls claim that their father wanted them to have an education.

Gul Nagaat studied at the DJ School in Danyore and did her matric in 1996. At Danyore she stayed in her aunty's house. On her return to Ghulmit, she started teaching at the Shah Wali Private Model School where she taught mathematics to class 8. The AKES field staff told her about the scholarships and the method of acquiring them. She got her scholarship and as a result she did her FA from the Islamabad Board. She was helped by teachers of government school who coached her for her FA. Currently, she is doing her BA from the AIOU in Education and Economics. After studying and teaching she works on the family land in the evening. She is married now and her husband is a telephone operator in Gilgit. She wants to continue to teach and her husband supports her both in her desire to study and in her desire for continuing teaching.

Mariam is one year younger than Gul Nagaat. She did her matric in 1997 and taught herself with the help of her elder sister. She studied at home for her FA and is now doing a CT from the AIOU. Her parents wanted to educate both the girls, perhaps because of the Wah environment. People in the family opposed their education perhaps because the younger generation in the extended family is not educated. Mariam teaches in the middle government school in Ghulmit and teaches at the coaching centre in the afternoon.

Both the girls wanted to go out of Ghulmit to study but due to opposition from the extended family they were not able to do so. They regret this very much. AKES has offered Mariam a scholarship to go to Islamabad to do her BA but her family has not permitted it. Meanwhile, they have got her engaged. Luckily, her husband to be is an FA. Both the girls agree that without the coaching centre it would have been difficult for them to receive further education and without the scholarship it would have been impossible.

During the conversation with the girls, Rahat Bano sat in. She is a teacher at the coaching centre and has been in Ghulmit for the last three years as a result of having married a person from Ghulmit. I wanted to photograph Rahat Bano and the girls, but they refused saying that it was not permitted.

The coaching centre where the girls teach was begun in 1997 by 'Sir' Talib, a government school teacher. Five teachers teach here of which three are women. Conditions (halaat), they say, determine the fee structure. The coaching centre in-charge is Muhammad Issa who did his FA from the SM Science College in Karachi. He is currently doing his BA from the AIOU. For the last two years he has been teaching in the village government school in addition to teaching at the coaching centre since 1999. There are 103 students at the coaching centre and at an average eight of them do their matriculation every year. In addition to fees money is collected after harvests to support the coaching centre. Donation is voluntary. The centre acquired a matching grant but due to a cut in interest rates there are big problems.

The VEC looks after teaching quality, manages finances and mobilizes the community to support the education programme for women. There was very strong opposition to the coaching centre since the majority of the village population did not want their girls to be educated and objected strongly to male teachers teaching them. Therefore, male teachers who were acceptable to the parents were chosen. Opposition has slowly declined. Eighty per cent of the graduates of the coaching centre are teaching in the English medium school in Nagar of which three are in Ghulmit. They are the soldiers (*sipahis*) of change.

1530 hours: Lunch at Rakaposhi View

1645 hours: Minapin

From the Rakaposhi View on the Karakoram Highway, we travelled to Minapin. We located the AKES built school and inquired as to where we could find Anila Perween, one of the NORAD funded scholars. Someone went to fetch her from her house.

Finally, Anila Perween arrived and we had a conversation. Her father is a land owner with substantial landholdings. Both he and her mother have no education. However, her

father's brother received education and finally joined government service. He became a DC and in that capacity he moved around the Northern Areas. She visited her uncle often and so did her brothers. They saw that their uncle's children were being educated and they too wanted to be educated. Their uncle also advised their father to educate his children. Subsequently, she lived with her uncle and did her matric from Skardu in 1996 where her uncle was posted. One of her brothers was crucial for encouraging her to get educated.

Looking back at the establishment of the coaching centre and her decision to teach over there, she says that 75 per cent of Minapin was against the establishment of the Centre and against her teaching. However, now things have changed and the daughters of those who opposed the Centre and her teaching, are now studying in the coaching centre themselves. One of the major objections to the Centre was that men would be teaching young girls. To overcome this problem the male school teachers visited the homes of prospective girls students (those who have done their primary and middle school) and assured them that their daughters honour would be safeguarded. It worked, but slowly and over time.

Anila Perween has one elder sister who is uneducated. She has three brothers. One is a driver and has done his middle school. The other has done his MA from Karachi and the third did his BA and is teaching in Skardu. Anila Perween was married in 1999 and now she has two kids. Her husband is in Lahore and works at the Civil Aviation Authority. She is willing to take a teaching job anywhere in the Northern Areas and says that if necessary she will go there alone with her kids. She will manage. The decision will be her own. This is society in transition. I wonder how siblings react and relate to each other when one is educated and the other is not.

We discussed issues related to education and the problems of educated girls getting married. Maybe they do not accept their parent's choice of husbands for them. She says that for the time being they will accept what their parents decide. After all she accepted to marry the man her parents choose.

I wanted to photograph Anila Perween but after a short discussion with Sabir Hussain, she refused being photographed. She said that society (*mashara*) did not allow it.

24 August 2003:

0930 hours: Left Gilgit

1200 hours: Arrived Hakis

Hakis is the village of our driver Khuda Bux. The school has two blocks. The old block is a concrete wall and pre-cast concrete roof affair. It has three rooms. The rooms are large (about 16 x 30 feet). They have been divided into two by shelving. No one can give us an exact date of when this block was built. From the design, size and technology, it was probably built in 1988. Next to the block two classrooms were built in 1999 with NORAD funds. These classrooms are in the post R&D technology of stone walls and plywood beams and GI sheet roofs.

We held a meeting in the classroom with Sher Khan who was once a VEC member and had served in the Gilgit scouts; current VEC member Khan Bahadur who is a teacher at the school and has done a BSc from the Karachi University; and Zainnama who is a teacher at the school. Zainnama has done her FA from the AIOU. She is from Punial but her husband is from Hakis. She did her matric by attending the coaching centre in Punial. Later on, the headmaster of the school, Umer Jan joined us. He has been the headmaster since 1996 and has done his BA from the AIOU in 2001. Earlier he did his FA from the Federal Board Islamabad.

The school has five teachers of which three are women. All the women have done their FA from the AIOU through the coaching process. The coaching centre has three teachers and they are all women. One of them did her FA from the Aga Khan Academy at Hunza and BA from the Degree College in Gilgit. The major problem with the coaching centre is that there is no science lab in Hakis and so the coaching centre can only conduct Art classes.

Zainnama came to Hakis in 1990 and at that time there were only three matriculate girls and all three of them had come from other areas of the NA after marrying into Hakis families. Now, she says there are lots of matriculate girls and many who have done their graduation. Most of these girls are now teaching or have become LHVs. Some are also working in Gilgit in offices. She feels that this is a revolution. In 1990 it was unimaginable.

1600 hours: Sherquila

We arrived at the Sherquila School so as to meet with Robina, Shamshad Begum and Gul Nargis who had all received scholarships from NORAD. We met with the *chowkidar* who informed us that Robina had left for Karachi with her husband, Shamshad Begum was working in Gilgit and Gul Nargis had also left but he did not where to.

Aga Khan School in Sherquila was built for the entire Ghizar region. It was a premier AKDN institution and was designed as a middle school. It could not be turned into high school since there was not enough space for adding classrooms. So the community acquired new land and shifted the primary school to that location. Three classrooms plus a headmaster's room was built at the new location in 1996 with USAID funds. Then with NORAD funds an additional four rooms and a toilet block were constructed. The buildings and the toilet block are in the Sikandar Ajam design and are singly storey. The buildings merge beautifully into the landscape but are cluttered over the site. Internally, the walls are of unplastered stone and the environment is pleasant and well lit. The roof has a small slope to it and also a parapet, which the teachers say, prevents the snow from sliding off. The stone wall toilets which are beautifully designed but also been built with a NORAD grant.

At the Aga Khan school we have a meeting with Qalandar Shah who was a teacher at a DJ School from 1967 to 1972. He studied at the Gilgit School and looked after the construction of the USAID financed block at the new school.

Shamshad Begum is his elder daughter. She did her matric from the Aga Khan Academy in Hunza. Then he had her admitted at Zubaida College Hyderabad. Her stay and fees were paid by the NORAD scholarship. He took her himself to Hyderabad and two years

later he went to get her back (both times his travel costs and those of Shamshad were borne by the scholarship). He did not see for two years for she did not come to the NA while she was studying in Hyderabad. However, she visited her relations in Karachi for her vacations. After she had done her FA he sent her to Islamabad Women's College where she completed her first year BSc and got a seat at the Fatima Jinnah Medical College Lahore. She got a scholarship for Lahore but it was discontinued after two years because she could not get the grades required for the continuation of the scholarship. For the next three years he paid for her education in Lahore and now she is a doctor. She has also done her one-year house job in Lahore and has come back and got a job at the AKHS in Gupis. She married just after her graduation. Her husband is also a doctor, qualified from Lahore and with an FSc from Karachi.

Yasmin is his other daughter and she is working with the AKRSP. She did her matriculation from the Sherquila School and her FA and BA from the Islamabad Women's College. For her FA and BA she was awarded an AKES (non-NORAD) scholarship. She taught for eight years at the Sherquila School. She is now married and her husband teaches at the AlHazar College.

Rehana Qalandar is his next daughter. She did her matric from Sherquila school and her FSc and BSc from Islamabad Women's College. For her FSc and BSc he got a scholarship from the AKES. She is now getting a scholarship of faculty development and is doing an MSc in Physics.

Nasreen, Zubaida and Farkhanda Jabeen are his daughters who have received no scholarships. However, he has paid for their education. Nasreen did her FA from the Women's College in Gilgit and her BSc and MSc from Jamshoro. She is now doing a BEd at Gilgit. Zubaida has done an FA from Jutial and Farkhanda is studying in class 6 at the Sherquila School. His only son has done his matric this year.

Qalandar Shah is from a totally uneducated family. He educated his children because those are God's orders and the farman of his old Imam who had said that if you have a daughter and a son and you do not have the means to educate both, then educate the daughter. Education he feels creates a civilized family and the civilized family creates civilized society. People in his extended family and village were opposed to his educating his girls. They said that girls go away so what is the use of teaching them. But he did not listen to them. His girls have changed his house which was like a house for animals into a house of human beings. They have redone the house and made it clean and comfortable. He says that people do not wish to marry educated girls. Girls are better educated than boys because the standards at the DJ School where girls are educated are far superior to standards at government institutions where boys are educated. He says many educated girls do not want to marry uneducated men and as such remain unmarried. This is a big problem. There are about 25 women in this village who are graduates or have done their post-graduation. Many of them are unmarried and those that have married have found good men outside of the village.

1930 hours: Arrived Gilgit

25 August 2003:

1100 hours: AKES Office

Meeting with Raees Shah and Fida Hussain Field Coordinator Nagar. General discussion on what I have seen and heard and on the next phase of the Self Help School Building Programme. We shared concerns and ideas which I will put down in my report.

I had a detailed discussion with Fida Hussain. He is from Billapin village in Nagar. He did his FA from Gilgit and his graduation from the AIOU in 1999. He is Anila's cousin and his father and mother were both uneducated. His uncle (who was also Anila's uncle) was educated and was his role model. When he was in class 8, he came under the influence of his teacher Syed Muzaffar Shah who had been educated in Karachi and always spoke of female education. Shah Sahib established the first girls' school in Junejo's time through the New Roshni School Programme. The school produced a number of primary girl graduates. It was begun with great difficulty because of objections from the conservative sections of the village population.

The AKRSP was in touch with the Billapin village community and acted as a bridge between the community members who wanted education and the AKES. The progressives won and eight girls from Gilgit were brought back to teach at the village. Fida Hussain and his father quarrelled about the education of his sisters. His father was against their education.

Fida Hussain he is the only person working for the AKES in Nagar. He observes teachers and students and the education process and reports back to the AKES. When teachers go on training there are no substitute teachers and often one cannot find volunteers. Till 2002, the office consisted of a desk at the AKRSP and he has a motorbike for communication purposes. Now, there is an office and one additional staff member who is really just an office boy.

There are 21 coaching centres in Nagar. Till 1999, there were 14 and in 1997 there were seven. Unfortunately, the government has not provided teachers for them and made them a part of the government system as they were supposed to, or rather as was assumed that they would. In the private sector there are 14 Naunehal schools which include two high schools, one in Chalt and one in Oskhandas. All these schools are English medium schools and their teachers are from local communities. Almost all these schools have VECs and PTCs. AKES gives training to the Naunehal School teachers. The schools now run entirely on fees.

The Naunehal NGO began as the Naunehal Health Organisation in the early eighties. In the late eighties, it became the Naunehal Health and Education Organisation. It is now called the Naunehal Development Organisation. In Nagar, there is another organisation called the Anjuman-e-Hussainia Nagar. Fida Hussain feels that a Nagar based organisation that functions like the AKES is necessary if education is to be democratized in Nagar. The Anjuman-e-Hussainia he says has considerable property and earns about Rs 100,000 per month. It could easily give scholarships to students. Fida Hussain also spoke about how his father was turned out of school and could not receive an education because the local Raja did not want him to. He also spoke about the problems he had when he became a teacher at the girls' school. The villagers objected to a young man teaching young girls. He had to go and visit the parents of every girl student (and prospective ones) to convince them that he was an honourable man.

1545 hours: Leave for Islamabad by car

2245 hours: Arrive Bisham. Night at Bisham

Building and Construction Improvement Programme (BACIP)
Consultancy for the Aga Khan Foundation
Selected Consultancy Field Notes
(July 03 to July 11, 2001)

By
Arif Hasan

July 03, 2001

Left for Gilgit by car driven by Jan Faraz. I was accompanied by a BACIP intern Jamrana Poonawala. She was good company. The journey was hot. We stopped at Bisham at Abasin Hotel for lunch. Arrived in Gilgit at 2100 hours. Checked in at Serena. During the journey Jan Faraz spoke about his village. He is from Phandar. Has worked in Karachi for two years as a driver. Married, he has four children, two girls and two boys. He does not want any more kids. The family stays in Phandar, 10 hours away. He says that there is a big difference between the older and younger generation in his village. The older generation is not happy with the changes that have taken place due to education. From his own family, four educated girls are working in Karachi. More wish to go. There were only four Pathan shops in his village previously, but now the Phandaris have opened their own shops. Agriculture is dying. Working as a labourer is more lucrative. Every educated person wants a job but in the Northern Areas (NA) there are no jobs for the educated. So they go elsewhere. Heroine is common in Gilgit but not in the other regions. People have sold their land and shops for heroine.

July 04, 2001

0945 hours: Meeting with Faqar Ahmed

Faqar Ahmed was in the army. He knows the NA well. He is articulate and well-informed.

He stressed that in the previous BACIP R and D phase, the socio-economic aspect was missing as was the ecological aspect. To this end he has planned four studies: i) economic; ii) ecologic; iii) health and hygiene (studies have revealed that eye disease is not caused by smoke but by rubbing smoke infested eyes with dirty hands) and iv) improvement in the quality of life for women and children.

In terms of ecology, he stated that 1.1 M3 of timber is burnt in the NA. Also due to house expansion in the NA agricultural land was disappearing since families owned an average of only 30 to 35 kanals each. Therefore village planning was necessary and for that he had set up Village Planning Committees. He was also working with WWF to set up a Environmental Friendly Housing System.

1500 hours: Meeting with Mohammad Akbar Shah from Phandar

Mohammad Akbar Shah was visiting BACIP from Phandar. He was in the army and is an active social worker. He spoke about the days of the Rajas. Same old story. They would not let you leave the village. They would turn you out of the village. They punished you with forced labour. They made your women work as domestic help. They did not let you study or do business. They took away your agricultural produce.

1645 hours: Meeting with Noha Sedki

Noha is Egyptian, brought up and educated in Canada. She is a planner. She will stay with BACIP for two months (one has already passed). She is setting up an evaluation and monitoring system for products, gender, house impacts, entrepreneur performance. So far they have been to a number of villages and tried out a few questionnaires.

She is also conducting a health survey with AKHS on health and housing in which 50 BACIP and 50 non-BACIP houses are being surveyed. This survey she feels will influence donors and perhaps its results can also be used as promotional material for users.

Earlier: Lunch with Faqar/Quyoom

Faqar has served in the army in the NA at various locations. According to him the Afghans who came into Pakistan through the Chitral passes were destitutes. They consisted mainly of women and children. They married off their women to the locals in exchange for land and money and in the process became agriculturists, herders and businessmen. The female children have also grown up and are being offered in marriage at a price. In this manner, the Afghans have consolidated themselves. According to Quyoom, the Gilgit Bazaar had also been taken over by the Afghans but then the army moved in to push them out. In the process they were replaced by the Pathans.

During the lunch discussions, we also spoke of the Beyricho. Quyoom says that in the older days they were not allowed to own land or animals. They were paid

in dairy or agricultural products and they made tin products and sang and danced – these were considered lowly professions. Now many of them are educated and they do not like their fathers do perform these functions, especially playing music. The Beyricho or *doom* as he is called in Gizar is almost extinct and non-Beyrichos are becoming blacksmiths. Singing and dancing has also become extinct from many festivities in the NA related to harvesting, sowing, etc.

2000 hours: Meeting with Salman Beg of AKCSP

Salman Beg is head of the AKCSP. He was in the Pak Army for 25 years. He is from Hunza.

Salman said that about 20,000 tourists visited Karimabad last year. Well if each spent Rs 1,000 average, then Karimabad received Rs 20,000,000 for its economy in about six months – not bad!

We discussed many things. NA languages and their origins; need for documenting of NA folklore and historic buildings; the Shigar Fort restoration etc. We also discussed the Beyricho and Salman feels that they are making a big comeback to entertain tourists. Mominabad, their village near Baltit, he says is becoming rich as they are also manufacturing and selling musical instruments.

We also discussed gold. Tradition says that it was available in the rivers and streams of Shamshal. Salman says that some army chaps have told him that somewhere, he does not know where, 28 grams of gold can be extracted from one tone of earth.

July 05, 2001

1615 hours: Meeting with Ghulam Saeed in his office

Engineer Shafa Ali was with Ghulam Saeed when I arrived. He used to work with the PWD but now he is working with the NA Education Project (NAEP). This is a Rs 100 crore project. Rs 90 crore is for the construction of over 1,000 classrooms and Rs 10 crore for training of school staff, developing materials for education etc. The Education Department has developed a special construction unit for this project. The community is to build the schools themselves and contribute 10 per cent to the cost, the Government of Pakistan will contribute 20 per cent and the rest will come from a World Bank loan. Moazam Ali, is the architect of the schools and is a local.

No BACIP elements have been integrated into the design of the schools as, according to Shafa Ali, the communities do not want them. Also, he says that these BACIP elements do not exist in any engineering codes. So once again most of the schools are going to be RCC buildings. They will all leak; they will be so cold in winter that students will study out in the sun, and so hot in summer that the students will study out under the trees and they will collapse and kill in an

earthquake. What a waste! Can the design be changed now? No says Shafa Ali, its too late, a number of schools have begun construction and then any change will have to be approved by the World Bank in Washington and that will delay the project which must be completed by 2003.

At his university in Lahore they did not teach him how to design in timber and stone nor did they teach him about insulation. It is the same with other engineers as well and so we have the architecture of the plains (which in its modern form is inappropriate for the plains as well) being replicated in the mountain regions of Pakistan – why? because of inappropriately trained professionals.

Mir Ahmed is an economic professor. He is also sitting in Ghulam Saeed's office. He is a member of Al Karam Welfare Organisation. They are building a school in Nomal and have asked Ghulam Saeed to design it. They feel that insulation BACIP style will be too expensive. How expensive? That question has to be answered and unfortunately is not being answered. I do not think it will be more costly than conventional construction.

July 06, 2001

1200 hours: Meeting with Dr. Abid, AKHS

Dr. Abid is a medical doctor. His family is originally from Hunza but they settled in Gilgit in the mid forties. After studying medicine he studied at the LSHTM and at the LSE. It was a joint course. He was uncomfortable in London, could not feel at home and so he found a Bengali mulla as his landlord. There he felt better.

I asked Dr. Abid three questions: i) How does he evaluate the AKHS centers in terms of thermal comfort; ii) How well acquainted is he with BACIP products; and iii) What are the future plans of AKHS.

Dr. Abid says that the early centers were built by the community and were of stone with a *desi* roof. They leaked sometimes and were incapable of keeping the heat and or cold out. Later, the AKPBS, P built centers were better but they too had poor thermal insulation. For these centers the community supplied sand, stone and gravel and transport to site for it and the AKPBS, P supplied all the rest of material and labour. LHVs in the Yasin/Gupis module where he worked, had complaints. Later mud was added to the roof as an insulator and it helped.

Dr. Abid is well acquainted with BACIP products because he is currently involved in the AKHS/BACIP health impact study. In Gupis, he has personally experienced the effectiveness of BACIP insulation technology. Also, he says that the study surveys show that in winter health conditions are better in BACIP houses.

July 07, 2001

1015 hours: Meeting with Qurban Ali at BACIP office

Qurban Ali is from Hunza. He is a diploma engineer and qualified from Gujrat. He was five years with the AKHB in Chitral and has been in BACIP since 1997. Before working in the NA he was with a government department in Islamabad for four years. Due to his background he is fully aware of NA ground realities.

He does not think that affordability is the reason why BACIP products do not sell. As he points out, houses are being built all over the NA with or without BCIP help. According to his estimates, 20 to 25 per cent of NA households are in the process of building new houses or extending the old. Why do they not seek BACIP support?

According to Qurban Ali, the reason for this is that they expect a subsidy from the AKDN programmes. This is a cultural issue. However, he feels that with each passing winter the demand for BACIP products will increase as people will see their effectiveness.

The other issue is that people have money here in September after the sale of potatoes. This is not true for the KKH villages only but for other regions as well. Skardu sold Rs one million worth of potatoes last year. The programme has to deal with this reality.

Qurban Ali feels that people trust the village *karigars* more than they trust BACIP. With them they have an old well-established relationship. The *karigars* are the chaudharies of the construction sector and they view BACIP as their competitors. They successfully run down BACIP products. Also people expect miracles from AKDN products so even if they are excellent, people always understate their effectiveness and are unduly critical.

The artisans are in most cases the *karta dhartas* of the AKRSP promoted VOs and as such they effectively block the VO's savings from being used for construction of BACIP products. In addition, the poor of the villages have very little share in the VO savings and very little voice in decision making.

In spite of all this, there are many queries from the Gilgit Bazaar regarding BACIP products and a few houses are being constructed with BACIP elements.

Qurban Ali feels that if courses for engineers and architects are arranged on timber and stone design theory, local professionals will attend and benefit. It will also change the nature of architecture in the NA and make it more appropriate.

Travel to Markhoon: 1200 hours Left Gilgit

Had lunch at the Rakaposhi view point. The waiter was from Gujranwala. On questioning we discovered that the management of the hotel was Punjabi (the cook was from Mandi Bahauddin district Gujrat) who had entered into partnership with a local, who supplied the land. We arrived at Markoon at 1830 hours and had difficulty in locating someone to talk to. In the end we went to the house of a very impressive woman who I had met last year when I was here. She went out and located the coordinator BACIP and her husband who is a carpenter and is called Mulla Ghafoor. But he is no mulla, mulla is just his name. The name of the coordinator is Karimulla Khan. He is a graduate from Karachi where he lived for many years. He works as a tourist guide and also works as a construction contractor.

Conversation with Karimulla and Ghafoor

There are 18 BACIP demos in the village and not a single replication. Karimulla explained that the reason for this is that people want BACIP to supervise the product construction as they do not trust the artisans.

Karimulla feels that the artisans in Markhoon should form a company and the company staff, after being trained by BACIP should build for the people. However, Markhoon has about 8 to 10 carpenters and 8 to 10 masons. There will never be enough work for them in Markhoon. As it is most of them work outside of the village since there is not enough work in the village for them. In addition, Mulla Ghafoor informed me that people in the village do not pay him properly since it is not the tradition to pay village artisans but to give them a gift like a goat or a cow. Also, if he receives training at BACIP and gets a certificate, it will help him to get a better job with government contractors so why should he stay in Markhoon? He would love to live and work in his village but he cannot deal with differed payments or lesser than normal payments that villagers make.

Karimulla also spoke about BACIP training courses that are given in Gilgit. Artisans attending them are paid Rs 175 per day. However, for attending the course the artisans spend much more per day in board and lodging and travel. In addition, he loses his daily wages. So why should one go for training?

Mulla Ghafoor also says that for building BACIP products one needs a lot of materials that are available only at BACIP offices at Gilgit. It is not feasible to go all the way to Gilgit to get them and nor does it make economic sense to make this journey for one or two products.

Karimulla also raised an important issue. He said that agriculture was suffering since people were going into other jobs and trades. He felt that a "balance should be maintained between cash and agriculture". To this end he felt that those persons who could not look after their lands should have other people looking

after them and that this system should be institutionalised. Another type of serfdom? Yes, but in this day and age it will not last even if it takes off. The land will be taken over by those who till it.

At 2000 hours, left Markhoon for Gulmit and stayed at a Guest House where we stayed in 1988.

July 08, 2001

1030 hours: Meeting with Sahib-e-Nazar, Owner Saw Mill, Gulmit

Sahib-e-Nazar is a carpenter like his father and grandfather. He is about 60 years old and works with his elder brother. His family makes “whole” houses, including stone masonry. The Gulmit Jamaatkhana and the DJ School were both built by him and they are beautiful buildings.

He has seldom worked out of the Gulmit region, but he then decided to purchase machines from Gujranwala. These machines were for sawing, sizing and “randa”. A Gujranwala technician was supposed to come and help him set them up but he did not turn up so the two brothers set them up themselves and have been maintaining them without any difficulty. Now he serves people upto Sust, all of the Chiporson region.

However, the brothers, who have a lot of work also have a lot of problems. They cannot make accurate estimates of house construction. As a result, houses do not get completed in time due to a lack of money. Also people do not pay on time, delaying work. In addition, people expect him to work and supply materials on credit, which he is forced to do at times. In addition, he has problems getting timber. He buys it in “black” from smugglers because getting it the legal way is too complicated and time consuming. He says that people owe him Rs 400,000 from the last season. I told him that then he is not only the architect, contractor and engineer for the people of the region but also their HBFC! He agreed and pointed out that one of his biggest problems is that he is uneducated and cannot keep accounts.

Sahib-e-Nazar is not willing to make BACIP products under the present circumstances. His present work brings him much more money than BACIP’s work can and he cannot do the two together. His children (sons) have got educated and do not wish to work as carpenters. He has kept apprentices in the past but they have gone away as tourist related jobs pay better. Also he doubts if people will invest in BACIP products as their priority is educating their children. He also mentioned that Gilgit was simply too far from him to go and get BACIP accessories.

When I mentioned that people will save on timber in winter if they use BACIP products, he said that people (most of them) get their timber from the *nula* and it is free. When I said that there were health benefits, he said that there was an

excellent AKHS health centre in Gulmit. It was obvious that he was not cooperating and it was also obvious that it was because he saw BACIP as a competitor. As a result, I suggested that he should become BACIP for the whole area. He should be the promoter and provider of the products and that, if he agrees, BACIP at its own cost for one year should give him a young man who would keep accounts and liase between him and BACIP Gilgit. His eyes lit up and he wanted to discuss this issue immediately with his brother. I said he should think it over and make a proposition to BACIP.

July 09, 2001

1430 hours: Arrived in Sherqila

Went straight to the under construction house of Nawaz Khan. It is a concrete block house with BACIP wire reinforcements and yet to be put in wall insulation and insulated GI sheet roof. It has large south facing double glazed windows as well. It will be a comfortable house and after this winter, people will certainly build in this manner. BACIP will have a demand.

Michael, Jumana and Quyoom went away to fill in questionnaires while Akbar, Qurban Ali and me when and sat in a beautiful orchard and waited for some village residents to come and talk to us. We were told that in Sherqila everyone sleeps in the afternoon and people will have to be woken up. I felt very bad about doing this but Qurban says that this is normal.

After about twenty minutes of waiting seven to eight senior citizens arrived. They were the *motibars* (notables) of the village. Shopkeepers, school teachers, ex-army persons, members of political parties. One of them had fought against the Dogras and was instrumental in forming the People Party in his area. During the anti-Dogra struggle he had arrested the Dogra governor of his area. However, wonderful as these *motibars* were, it would have been good to have had a younger group to talk to.

According to the *motibars*, Sherqila has a population of about 8,000. It is growing and new couples want at least 25 houses every year. This figure is going to keep on increasing. They said that the “toys” that BACIP was giving them were OK but they were not going to solve this problem of catering to the needs of the new generation. They also stressed that the growth that was taking place was haphazard and needed to be planned otherwise there would be no land left.

I asked them about their *shamlaat*. It is three kilometres away and they are quite happy to expand their village in a planned manner over there. Also their *shamlaat* yields no timber for fuel and so almost all of them purchase it. This is all the more reason that BACIP’s “toys” should be in demand.

The *motibars* were not really discussing things seriously with us. They were negotiating a deal. So we had to tell them that we had no power to give them

anything. This changed the tone of the discussion. However, they came back to the issue of how they could finance their new houses. Their VO savings were far too small for this purpose and there was no other source. When I suggested a group loan from the HBFC, they got quite excited, until one of them pointed out that the HBFC no longer gives loans in the Gizar region as the land settlement process has been halted here. But they agreed that they would look into this issue.

We then visited another house where the owner has put in the roof insulation at his own cost and the walls have been insulated as a BACIP demo. The owner is a rich man. He says that during last winter he used almost no fuel. In 15 years the savings he makes on fuel will pay not only the cost of insulation but the construction cost of the whole house.

I asked him if he would be interested in forming a partnership with BACIP whereby he becomes the promoter and producer of BACIP products in his area. He said he would be happy to do so and he was sure that he would be successful.

Returned to Gilgit after seeing the Buddah 2000 house. Dinner with Akbar, Faqar, Noha at the Serena Hotel.

Building And Construction Improvement Programme (BACIP)

Evaluation – 2000

Selected Consultancy Field Notes

By
Arif Hasan

07 July 2000

Left Gilgit for Farfu village. Arrived there at 10:00 hours after an hour's drive. Ghulam Saeed who accompanied me, collected a number of people. We had a meeting and I enquired about their village.

The village has about 150 houses. It has 12 carpenters and 8 to 12 masons. There are 7 to 8 shops and they give items to the residents on credit for a year – from harvesting to harvesting. The entire younger generation, including the girls are studying and some girls are also matriculates, they inform us very proudly. Almost all the generation of up to 20 years is at least middle pass. A number of the residents are working in Karachi (they cannot give a figure) and about 30 persons are in the army. So the village is not badly off, more so because they have additional land one and a half hour walking distance away. There is no road to this land and they get to it and bring produce from it by donkey which each house owns. As in the rest of the Northern Area (NA) they do not work on each others land as labour as it is considered degrading not being self-sufficient.

There are two saw mills in the village. One of them is owned by Shah Nazir who is also a carpenter and mason. His saw mill is not doing well because the village has imposed a ban on the use of timber from its forest except for the personal use of the village residents. There is a Village Timber Committee that regulates the use of timber and supervises the ban.

Shah Nazir works as a carpenter or mason for about 200 days a year and this, and not agriculture, is the main source of his income. He says that two to three

new houses are constructed in the village each year and there are about 10 to 15 new improvements of between Rs 1,000 to 10,000.

The residents claim that only 30 per cent of the village purchases fire wood at about Rs 50 per maund. The rest collect it from the forest and bring it to the village on donkeys. One man working all day can bring in one donkey load of timber, which is two maunds. In a year a household of 10 persons requires about 100 maunds.

Sadiq Shah is a young school teacher. He is one of the BACIP main resource persons. He is constructing a demo toilet and says that there is a constant stream of visitors to see and enquire about it. Shaukat Ali has water proofed his roof but the roof needs a parapet and the topping is disintegrating. Mohammad Mir, member of the Timber Committee has a demo plywood wall insulation. He intends to insulate his roof too with a plywood ceiling at his own cost, but only after he has water proofed his roof. He has built a RC house so this expense is not much. Another resident has done insulation plaster in the *Desi* house. The owner claims that he used half the amount of timber last winter and as a result saved himself at least 12 days of hard labour. He says that everyone is interested in insulating their walls but getting cement, *jali* and plastic all they way on a jeep from Gilgit is expensive and problematic, although local *karigars* can easily do the job.

Shah Nazir's father has a demo BACIP stove. The women of the house say it gives greater heat, has less back draft, uses half the normal fire wood, gives no smoke, does not blacken the walls and every ones' health is better. Excellent advertising.

In another house there is a demo bedding rack. The woman of the house explains the advantages. The beddings do not smell anymore since they are aired, they do not occupy space, children do not climb and pee on them, the house looks better – all the advantages that SN explained to me yesterday.

Sher Ali is building a house and wants BACIP help. He wants a one storey house as it is cheap and easy to construct. However, if BACIP can convince him that a two-storey house is as cheap, he will build one and have the “*desi* house” section on the first floor.

A discussion was also held on why have a hatch at all in a new house – windows are enough. However, everyone said that a house is not a house without a “*desi ghar*”. So that is that. Tradition triumphs in something at least.

Concern was also voiced at the conditions of the *Kot*. It is too congested, it is collapsing. People are leaving it to build on their farmlands and as a result the farmlands will disappear. What can be done?

This village is lucky. It has its own timber resources which are free for its residents. It has skills. As such roof hatches, kitchen fixtures, bedding racks will

cost much less than BACIP estimates. It also has a *dom* family that work as blacksmiths – they can be trained to make stoves. The village artisans say they have no problems in replicating the BACIP products. Only the acquiring of non-local materials is expensive and difficult. The village residents claim that they have no problems with their coordinator and RPs. However, they would like BACIP staff to visit for longer.

08 July 2000

Meeting with Ali Aman Shah SE, Member AKBPSP:

The meeting with the SE can be summed up in a few words. As an SE of the PWD he was not willing to accept BACIP roof structures and earthquake resistant technologies as he considered them experiments. He was not willing to accept that they were normal engineering practices in other countries. For him to accept them they have to be incorporated into Pakistan codes and regulations. The insulation plaster he feels is far too weak and will crack on impact. Also its thermal values have to be ascertained “scientifically” before it can be used. However, he feels that hatches and double windows as designed by BACIP are usable and useful. According to him, Rs 60 – 70 crore of work is done by his organisation each year. As a member of the AKBPSP, he has no problems with BACIP’s structural products.

1400 – 1630 Gilgit to Karimabad with Quyoomb:

Immediately after arriving in Karimabad we visited the restored Baltit Fort. The houses along the pathway to it from the road below have been rehabilitated and the pathway has also been paved in stone. It looks good but different from how I and Reza Ali had envisaged it. The paving of the pathway should have been rougher or more uneven as one tends to slip on the way back.

Internally, the Fort has been very well restored but the exhibits and the way they are presented could have been much better – and still can be. The lovely cafeteria in the local style just outside the Fort does not function and an ugly concrete construction has been put up on the pathway just before the Fort entrance. But then this is after all the NA and you cannot get everything right in one go.

Back at the hotel, I spoke to Quyoomb about BACIP. According to him, the villages in which BACIP works were identified through a PRA. Resource persons and coordinators were already in place before SN came. They were paid then but SN put a stop to the payments. He also decided that the staff would go and live with the village community for three days in a month rather than visit them for a few hours. It was decided that they would stay in house rented from the community for the period of the stay and that the community would provide the food. It was also decided that for these houses some improvements could be carried out using BACIP products provided the cost of such improvements was

not more than Rs 5,000. However, this has not happened so far but as a result of living with the community BACIP staff understands them better and excellent meetings and discussion have taken place after dark when the whole village is there. But the staff has complaints. They are forced to sleep with other guests, the food is bad, the sheets are not clean. It is only recently that the staff has put this in writing and some action on it has still to be taken.

People were given thermometers and balances to monitor temperature and fuel use changes in their homes due to the installation of thermal insulation products. They were not able to use the thermometers properly (but nor could the BACIP staff!) but they were able to give a fairly accurate idea of the difference of timber use.

After dark I went for a walk from Baltit Inn up to the Bazaar. It was slightly chilly and there was a waxing crescent moon in the sky. The Baltit Fort, all flood lit stood out, guarding the settlements below. This restoration and flood lighting of the Fort has transformed Karimabad. It has given it an identity, a focal point, a link with history, a sense of aesthetics to its residents.

I drop in at the shops along the bazaar, I ask the shopkeepers if their trade has improved as a result of the Fort Restoration. No, they say, it has not but it will (when conditions in Pakistan are better) as the Fort is now famous throughout the world. The shopkeepers say that because of the Fort Restoration the people have become more environment conscious. So much for those who say that conservation of the built heritage is not development. From conversation with them I also discover that the Town Management Board, envisaged by Reza Ali and me in 1992, is not just a paper reality but a major actor in deciding how development takes place.

09 July 2000

0730 – 0930: Karimabad to Moorkhun

On arrival at Moorkhun, we were met by RP Aman Ali who informed us that the coordinator Karimullah Khan was not available as his sister and then his aunty had died – both within two days. Much of the men of the village had also gone to Passu in connection with the funeral. So we sat down at Aman Ali Shah's house for a *gup-shup* regarding the village and BACIP. We were joined by Inayatullah who has worked in Saudia as a driver and has just disinvested in a tractor that he used to hire out.

According to our two informants, one part of the village has 42 houses and the other 72. All people have land and all of them plant seed potato because it gives them money. Because of planting seed potato they cannot fulfil their wheat requirements and so they have to purchase flour from Gilgit. About 20 houses have a family member in the army and three persons work in Saudia and two in Kuwait. About 20 to 30 persons trade regularly with China but since the army take over, getting permission to go to China is becoming problematic. A number (unspecified) of

persons also work at loading and unloading at Sost which is nearby and about 25 to 30 persons also have shops there. However, shops and loading and unloading lasts only from April to October for nothing happens in winter in this region.

There is no tourism related work for the residents of Moorkhun since there is no access to their glacier, but now a road / track is being constructed and this will surely bring tourists to them. There are eight carpenters and three masons in the village and some of the carpenters can also do masonry work. There are no blacksmiths. This work only Beyrichos can do and there are none here. The village has one saw mill.

There is no *kail* or *dayar* trees in this region. The village pasture lands do have juniper trees on them but the village has decided to ban their cutting since these are ancient trees which they wish to protect. A village timber committee supervises this ban. People have planted *sufaida* but it cannot meet timber and fire wood demands because at this height the *sufaida* requires 20 to 30 years to mature.

Kael or *dayar* for construction purposes is acquired from Chilas through a permit by a contractor and he sells it to the saw mill from where people buy it. The cost of *dayar* works out to Rs 200 per cubic foot.

The village has pasture lands at Khunjrab about 30 kilometres to the north. Most of the households collect fire wood from there and transport it by tractor to the village. Three persons working all day for nine days collect 105 maunds or three tractor loads. About 15 to 20 houses purchase fire wood that comes from Chilas at Rs 150 per maund. They estimate that about 140 maunds of timber is used by an average household per winter in their village. This means Rs 21,000 if you purchase it. People also burn coal that comes from China. It is cheaper than purchasing timber. They also hope to get coal from the Chaporsan *nulla* mines which AKRSP have taken on lease.

Two to three new houses are built every year in the village and about 10 to 15 small improvements are also made. The entire school going age population goes to school and an average of Rs 2,000 per year is spent on children's diseases. The most common disease is winter flu. Aman Ali Shah, our host, is a carpenter by profession. The village has 2 VOs. The 72 houses VO has a saving of Rs 11 lacs and the 42 houses one of Rs 7 lacs. It seems to be a rich village.

BACIP came to this village one and a half years ago. A PRA was done and the village chose their coordinator and male and female RPs. The criteria for choosing the coordinator and RPs is if they can give time to the work, have experience of social work and or have skills relevant to the implementation of BACIP products.

The demo products here are hatch window, south side window, north side window, three types of insulation, bedding rack, washing tubs, stove, kitchen cabinet, utensil cabinet, grain storage, water proofing of roof and dust prevention ceiling.

Aman Ali Shah has reproduced double windows with his own funds and intends to insulate his roof with plywood. Four houses have replicated water proofing using the labour that worked on the demo. There is a demand for two kitchen cabinets, two kitchen worktops, four plywood wall insulation and one geyser. They will carry out all this work with BACIP's guidance after the harvest. BACIP visits them about two to three days in a month. They feel this is insufficient but are unclear as to what would be gained if BACIP staff spent more time with them.

We visited a number of demo units a few of which are described below. Inayatullah, the driver from Saudia has wall mud plaster and straw insulation. A local mason did it without difficulty. His wife says that as a result they used less than one trolley of fire wood this winter instead of the normal two. She also says the children are happier, more comfortable and healthier as a result. Inayatullah however, prefers plywood insulation to what he has. He says plywood is neater, better looking, less disruptive in putting up since it is a dry exercise which one person can do whereas for the mud straw plaster, five persons are required. His wife would like the wall painted white put with "*wilayati*" paint. The *desi* paint she says, peels off.

Asiya's husband was a contractor but this year he is concentrating on seed potato. She has a kitchen cabinet with which she is very happy. It gives her more space, protects her utensils from dust and keeps flies out. Then there is Bibi Moojeen. Her husband is a policeman in the customs department. She is very happy with her bedding rack. She says it keeps the beddings dust and smell proof and provides her with more space. Her next desire is to have a stove cum geyser. It will save firewood which means money as they purchase firewood.

Azizuddin Shah is a driver. He was not at home. He has a dust prevention ceiling. His wife told us that earth used to fall through the timber boards but now that does not happen. They have also water proofed their roof at their own cost for Rs 2,500. However, the roof requires a parapet and the topping is weathering badly.

Hamidullah was a shopkeeper but does not work now. He was in Saudia and his brother has a garment factory in Karachi. There was no one but his daughter Rehana in the house. The house is well kept. There is an air of affluence. The roof used to leak but since BACIP treatment to it, it does not. The roof has a parapet, proper gargoyles and the topping is not disintegrating.

10 July 2000

1400 to 2000 Hours: Travel to Gindai (Yasin)

We travelled for about six long hours to the rest house in Yasin, half an hour beyond Gindai. During the journey both Nahida and Gul Sambar spoke a lot regarding their families and their aspirations and longings and ofcourse about BACIP. Gul Sambar also spoke about life in his village when he was a child and how everything had changed since then.

Nahida mentioned that her mother used to say that the people of Yasin and beyond were so poor that they used to give away their daughters to the rich people in Hunza so that they could at least have enough to eat. Gul Sambar said that it is said that they would give away a daughter simply for a box of tea. How true all this is one cannot say because here, like almost everywhere I suppose, stories related to women and sex get exaggerated.

Nahida has grown up in Libya and her three great attachments are to the moon, Rakaposhi and money. The last she says she does not have but will acquire, enormous amounts of it. Gul Sambar on the other hand, only wants to own a jeep – an old one.

We spent the night at the Yasin rest house. The DC was also there with gun carrying levies. He is investigating a *munder*. Why he should be doing this and not the police, is beyond my understanding and no one at the rest house can explain it.

11 July 2000

After breakfast I spoke to the *chawkidar* of the rest house about the cost of living in Yasin and as to how they acquired all that have now become the necessities of life. He said that their lives had been made easy by the Pathan shopkeepers and traders who have settled here. They give everything on credit – both monthly and seasonal – and much cheaper than at Gilgit. Clothes, tea, soap, shoes, batteries, matches and all the '*parchoon*' goods are made available by them. A *shalwar-qameez* suit for instance, they provide for just over a hundred, whereas in the Gilgit bazaar it is difficult to get a suit for less than four hundred. In addition, they also buy back old shoes, clothes, plastic, metal tins and bones. They also purchase animal skins which no one else does in Yasin. He feels the future of agriculture in Yasin is bleak because the younger generation simply wishes to go away to Karachi or do some sort of trade and business rather than work on the lands. He adds that he does not blame them, for what do you get from agriculture anyway?

We drove back to Gindai. On the way scores of exceptionally well dressed men, women and children were walking along the road, going to the Jamaatkhana, to celebrate the birthday of the Hazir Imam.

We arrived at Gindai and went to the house of Mohammad Faqir, the coordinator. (I think the house was of Mohammad Faqir's brother, who has just had his leg amputated because it was infested with cancer). Mohammad Faqir has just retired from the army and has received the various monetary retirement benefits so his is comparatively free and rich. Daulat and Sultan Hameed are the male resource persons. Daulat is a stone mason, almost all his work is in and around Gindai but he has also worked for 'private' parties in Hunza. Saba Parween and

Ayisha are the female resource persons. Saba Parween is a teacher. She has done her intermediate from the AIOU and Ayisha has done her matric locally. Very few of Pakistan's academics and or so called intelligencia know as to how much the AIOU has benefited the remote regions of Pakistan. These educated girls were almost non-existent in the NA which I knew eight years ago. They have come of age and the social culture of this place has already changed and in so short a span of time.

We all sit and discuss the village. The village has no fort or cluster. Almost all of its 102 houses are on farmland. I enquire as to why there is no fort and get two replies. One, that unlike between Hunza and Nagar, there were no enmities between Yasin and other areas and the other, that there was nothing in Yasin so why should anyone attack it.

The village has 5 to 6 carpenters, 10 to 12 masons and 9 to 10 shops all of which give materials on credit. There is one blacksmith but he is not a '*dom*'. Three to four new houses are constructed every year and 10 to 12 improvements. Sixty to seventy persons from the village are in the army and 15 young men are studying in Karachi although there is no one from here working abroad like in some other villages. All children, girls and boys, go to school.

Transport of goods to Gindai is the main problem that our friends identify during the meeting. Because of this everything is expensive. For example, a cement bag in Gindai cost Rs 325. For the poorer households there is no other source of income other than their lands, and this is not enough. As a result, about 5 per cent of the population works on the farms of their neighbours although traditionally this was considered degrading. The number of such persons is increasing.

It is miserably cold for 5 months and one cannot survive without firewood. Most families get firewood from the '*nulla*' which is 5 to 8 hours walking distance away, depending from which part of the '*nulla*' you gather the firewood. Some people gather and sell it at Rs 120 to Rs 150 per maund and a very minimum of 70 maunds is required to survive the winter. The whole of October is spent in collecting timber for the winter.

Dinar is a '*parchoon*' shopkeeper. He has a demo wall insulation. Inspired by its success he has changed his door frame and shifted his grain storage. The insulation has cut down on timber use, by how much, he cannot say, but it is quite a lot. By the look on his face, his 14 year old nephew, Karamat Ali wants to say something. I ask him how the insulation has benefited him. He says that apart from keeping him warm, it saves him time and effort because it is him, among others, who brings the timber from the '*nulla*'. The journey from the '*nulla*' is six hours both ways and you can get only one maund in one day. This is done one day a week in summer and for one whole month every day for winter. Now, with the insulation, the firewood collecting exercise for winter would last less than 15 days. This makes him very happy.

We also met the poorest of the poor. Niat Shah has a demo stove. The stove has saved his family about 25 to 30 per cent timber, maybe more, they are not sure. They get timber from the *nulla*. Either the wife fetches it or the small son. It is a hassle for Niat Shah is '*mafloog*' and cannot work. The family can save up to Rs 700, perhaps, in a season, but that is all. I know that if they can save Rs 700 then they can also save Rs 1,200.

Yar Mast Khan is also poor. He has a demo ceiling to prevent dust from falling and he says it has worked wonders. He has water proofed his roof himself. He purchased plastic for Rs 300 and since he used no cement, this was his only cost. If he had used cement he says, he would have needed Rs 300 more, which he did not have. The water proofing has the right falls, and the gargoyles are of *dalda* tins, well made. The parapet is of straw, almost non-existent, but he says the water does not seep into the walls, but I do not believe him. The BACIP developed tools for the roof water proofing are effective. Without them, he says, the job would have been very difficult.

1315 – 1830 Hours: From Gindai to Gilgit

During the journey from Gindai to Gilgit we stopped at Singal rest house and had tea which Gul Sambar made at his house which is just behind the rest house. The rest house is as lovely as in 1986 when I first saw it and the *chawkidar* is also the same.

In our various discussions during our journey, Gul Sambar gave me some interesting information. In the *nullas* of Singal (there are seven according to him) Gujjars have grazed their goats ever since he can remember. Before they were given this permission against payments in the form of goats, milk, *ghee* and butter. But now the Singal VO takes Rs 25 per goat per season from them. This sum comes to over Rs 150,000 per year and is made a part of the VO's savings. Cash has replaced barter even in dealings with Gujjars!

12 July 2000

0950 Hours: Visit to Isa Khan, AKTC

SN accompanied me to Isa Khan. We discussed the KPSS house improvement programme and how the settlement at the foot of the Fort had been rehabilitated. From the figures he has given me, it seems that people are more interested in rehabilitating their homes and extending them rather than building new ones. This is something I also feel from the discussions we have had in the villages in the last few days, but they do not know how to do it.

The discussion then shifted to GI sheets and their adverse aesthetic qualities – there is a strong feeling among the conversationists that they should be discouraged but then there has to be an affordable and functional alternative.

