

**TO:** American Institute of Pakistan Studies

**FROM:** Dr. Cabeiri Robinson

**DATE:** June 15, 2014

**RE:** Exit Report for AIPS Short-term (Embassy) Grant (cycle January 2013) for research on *Islamic Charities, Voluntary Organizations, and the Post-Disaster Reconstruction of Pakistani Kashmir*

**Overview:**

I was awarded a 4-month short-term grant to conduct field research in Pakistan for the project *Islamic Charities, Voluntary Organizations, and the Post-Disaster Reconstruction of Pakistani Kashmir*. This project seeks to analyze the ways that Muslim disaster victims of the earthquake of 2005 evaluated their interactions with representatives of religious charities and service societies, state institutions, and international aid agencies in order to show that these evaluations produced changes in public ideas about social responsibility and political accountability and have had a profound impact on post-disaster political society. Prior to the current grant period, I had conducted preliminary field research for this project in AJK during short field trips to Pakistan in 2005, 2006, and 2008, and I have presented early findings of this research in papers at several national conferences. The award of this AIPS Short Term grant enabled me to complete the field research for this project along with the formal declared end of the UN Recovery Project (March 2014). Concurrently with the completion of the field research, I applied for and was awarded a writing fellowship (Fall 2014) and two quarters of sabbatical (Winter and Spring 2015) to draft a book manuscript resulting from this research. The anticipated product of this research project is a book manuscript tentatively entitled “*From Humanitarian Jihad and to Humanitarianism, Inc.: Natural Disaster, Charitable Organizations, and the Post-Disaster Reconstruction of Pakistani Kashmir*.” When the manuscript is complete, it will provide a longitudinal perspective on nearly a decade-long process (2005-2014) of relief provision, social reconstruction, and recreation of political society after the Kashmir earthquake of 2005. This kind of sustained longitudinal examination of changes following a series of critical events is rarely possible in ethnographic studies of political transformation, and I anticipate that it will provide a unique and invaluable analysis of how Islamic and international political values are woven into the modern practice of everyday politics in Pakistan.

I took up the AIPS fellowship in January 2014 and conducted research and scholarly outreach activities in Pakistan through March 2014. (Due to delays in securing my visa, I was able to accept 3 months of the 4 months awarded on my grant.) During my time in Pakistan, I conducted field research for this project, facilitated several professional development workshops for graduate students and junior faculty at Pakistani institutions, guest-taught a number of classes, made several public presentations, and presented my previous research and my recently published books to colleagues and interlocutors from my first project (which was on Kashmiri refugee settlement in AJK and Pakistan).

**First, regarding the field research:**

I was based in Islamabad, but made brief approved trips to Lahore, Karachi, and Muzaffarabad to meet with government officials, civil activists and youth leaders who agreed to interviews. In Islamabad, I conducted numerous semi-structured and un-structured interviews with AJK government officials, leaders of Pakistani civil and religious charitable organizations, and representations of international development and humanitarian organizations as per my research proposal. I reestablished connections that I had made over previous periods of research in AJK and established new contacts in the AJK reconstruction authority. Over the course of my research, two new areas of focus emerged: I became interested in the new youth politics led by young people who were university students at the time of the earthquake and who got their first professional experiences as volunteers for INGOs or NGOs doing post-earthquake relief or social development work. A new line of inquiry in my research is to explore how their political consciousness differs from previous generations of Kashmiri leaders in Pakistan and how this political conscious is inked to trans-regional Kashmiri youth politics. A second line of inquiry is on the emergence of a post-disaster domestic tourist industry in AJK and its connection to the interests of Pakistani civil volunteers and youth activists who came to AJK as aid workers after the earthquake. The conversations and research on these dimensions continues via on-line conferencing, social media connections, and email dialogue.

**Second, regarding professional and scholarly presentations and institutional networks:**

I participated in two public events in February at the Karachi Literary Festival where I served as a commentator for the book launch of A.G. Noorani's "The Kashmir Dispute 1947-2010" and as a panelist on the Panel "Human Rights and Wrongs in Pakistan." I also ran two workshops- the first was a 4-day Workshop Series for Fatima Jinnah Women's University on topic of "Building a Research Culture to Support Junior Faculty Research and Publication at FJWU" (the collaborative written report on this workshops is currently pending); the second was on the topic of "The Extended Case Study Approach in Mixed Methods Social Science Research" for the Department of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. I also ran an open discussion session/mentoring Session for MPhil and PhD candidates on framing their thesis research topics for the Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. I gave two invited talks on my own scholarship: the first was for the Pakistan Council on Social Sciences at the National University of Science and Technology on the topic of "An Anthropological Analysis of Rights, Sovereignty, and the Social Organization of Militancy among Muslim Kashmiri Refugees" and the second was for the Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir on the topic of "Ethnographic Perspectives on Forced Displacement, Refugee Resettlement, and the Kashmir Conflict." I also gave an impromptu (by request) lecture to undergraduate classes in the Departments of Sociology and Laws at University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on the topic of "Ethnographic Methods in the Study of Law and Society" and an invited talk on

“Ethnographic Methods, Public Policy, and the Time-lines of the Social Imaginary” to an MA class on Public Policy and the Social Sciences at SZABIST (Shaheed Zulifikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology), Rawalpindi Campus. I am currently building on these linkages and in discussion with faculty at University of AJK about framing an MoU for future scholarly exchanges with the University of Washington and faculty at the Social Sciences Anthropology program at NUST have asked me to participate via skype/ conference technology in conferences and/or course instruction in the coming year.

**Third, regarding a side project which will result in distinct publication/ self-standing article:**

During my research on post-earthquake voluntary organizations, I became very interested in “Rescue 1122” which is a new, professionalized governmental organization devoted to the care of civilians and civil infrastructure in the face of emergencies. I visited their headquarters in Rawalpindi and Lahore and their training institutes in Lahore and Murree and interviewed a number of their officers, observed their training sessions, and interviewed beneficiaries and donors. I plan on authoring an article under a title such as *Rescue 1122, Human Security, and the Re-building of the Civil State in Pakistan* and am in discussion with senior officers about grant opportunities that might assist them in furthering their specialized training objectives.

**Finally, I would like to thank the AIPS for this grant and for the excellent networking, administrative, and logistical support that I received as a grantee in Pakistan.**

The short-term grants are financially generous and this allowed me to negotiate the leave that I required from my university to conduct a sustained period of field research. In Pakistan, the accommodations and logistical arrangements were well-organized and allowed me to make the most of my short term grant and to focus on my research and professional networking to the near exclusion of normal daily logistical concerns. The security situation in Pakistan is variable, and I was very impressed by the professionalism and sensitivity of the drivers assigned to me in regards to routes, destination, and surveillance of foreigners. The AIPS also worked with me to host several events in Pakistan for the benefit of Pakistani students and junior faculty which I believe expressed a seriousness of intent to collaborate and a respect for Pakistani colleagues and their professional careers. Additionally, I benefitted immensely from the extensive network of scholarly contacts that the AIPS has nurtured over the years. I particularly look forward with future interactions with the Council of Social Sciences of Pakistan (COSS), which I joined as a lifetime member in March 2014. I look forward to working with the AIPS and with colleagues in Pakistan to further strengthen US-Pakistan scholarly projects, institutional connections, and dialogue in the coming years. I will, of course, acknowledge AIPS’s invaluable contributions in all of the scholarly publications that result from this period of field research.