

The H people of Central Asia

The People Group

The third largest of over 50 people groups in Central Asia are the H people, numbering over 13 million people. They live across the region in rural areas working as farmers and merchants as well as in towns where they work in shops, restaurants and factories. Most H people are direct descendants of Persian and Arab traders who intermarried with locals and converted them to Islam. The H people predominantly identify themselves as Sunni Muslim and their mosques are the centre of their community life. With the influence of Eastern religions there are many expressions of Islam across the region although the more devout followers are found in rural areas.

Only about 500 H people are known to be following Jesus. While the number of believers is growing in many parts of the region very few have the opportunity to hear the Gospel. There are still cultural and geographical challenges impacting the sharing of the Gospel and growth of a sustainable faith community.

Global Interaction team among the H People

Our cross-cultural team continues to form significant friendships within the H community, as we see a growing interest from people wanting to know more about Jesus. Meeting over a hearty meal to discuss matters of life and faith is not only valuable to the H people but a way for cross-cultural workers to help build meaningful and lasting relationships.

The team continue in their commitment to culture and language learning so that they are able to deeply share the message of Jesus in response to the H people's spiritual searching and questions of faith.

Prayer Needs

- God to continue to work in the lives of H people, preparing their hearts to hear the Gospel
- H people seeking knowledge about God will connect with the team or an H believer
- Friendships between H people and the team will deepen and faith conversations will occur
- More people to commit to serving among the H people and learning culture and language so they can effectively communicate the message of Jesus

Pray for the Team Members (secure names used)

Kevin

Pete and Nomes

Walt (team leader based in USA) and Jeanine

Stories of Hope from Central Asia

God is Active

As Kevin connects with H people, he is regularly reminded that God is already actively at work in people's lives and preparing hearts to receive the Good News.

When speaking with an official about a business matter, the conversation turned to life and what happens after life, following questions from the officer. After meeting later at a restaurant and reading the Bible, the woman said that when she reads the Bible, '... something is tugging at my heart.' Kevin was reminded of the truth in Hebrews 4:12, where the Word of God is referred to as sharper than a double-edged sword.

At another time, Kevin was the only customer in a restaurant when an H student entered and chose to sit opposite him. The H man explained that he had previously had a foreign friend who had returned home and he hoped Kevin would be his new friend. The H man was familiar with stories from the Old Testament and he and Kevin have read some together.

Both of these new friends are curious to know more about God. Thank God for the way He is actively working in their lives, preparing their hearts to know Him personally and placing Kevin in a position to journey with them.

Communities Transformed

A few years ago, the team in Central Asia was approached to partner in a sheep loan project to support farmers living under the poverty line. As foreigners are rarely allowed into these villages, the team felt privileged to be offered the opportunity and gratefully accepted.

We celebrate the success of this project! Previously, many farmers were unable to generate adequate income through farming and were forced to seek work in the city. Through the project, farmers are lent sheep in order to produce lambs which they can sell. For many, this new income source means they can remain with their families in the villages. One particular farmer, who only had a primary school education, received training and after being lent eight ewes, produced 21 lambs. The income generated was enough to pay for his daughter's university tuition. Through the project, this farmer and others are given the opportunity to upskill and improve their family's situation in a real and long-term way.

Thank God for the transformative impact this project has had on whole communities and pray that this will open more opportunities for the team to engage with people in their need and build meaningful and life-changing relationships.

**>>> For more stories of barriers being overcome,
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