



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.
An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

Education in the Aga Khan Development Network

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) works to alleviate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and illness through community-based initiatives. AKDN works for universal access to education and improved learning by all students, especially girls and other traditionally marginalized groups. AKDN's agencies have complementary mandates and a presence in 35 countries, where they work with host governments, international partners and local institutions. **AKDN's education programs work to ensure that young people have the knowledge, skills and values to succeed and contribute to society.** These programs extend from pre-school through the university level, with teacher training and school improvement as elements across all levels. Five AKDN agencies work directly in education: the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Aga Khan Education Services (AKES), the Aga Khan Academies (AKA), Aga Khan University (AKU), and the University of Central Asia (UCA). Together they advance the mission of helping young people from all backgrounds become learners and leaders.



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND MAKING IT TO PRIMARY EDUCATION

Begun in 1985, AKDN's programs in Early Childhood Development (ECD) work in 16 countries to promote the holistic development of all children up to age 8. AKDN was among the first groups to highlight a global crisis in Grade 1, where most school dropouts occur. AKDN programs address this crisis by better preparing schools for children and creating a welcoming environment that fosters their growth as learners. For example in East Africa, both the Madrasa Resource Center and a primary education program use a whole-school approach that creates a learning environment where parents support, children enjoy, and teachers and community leaders facilitate a quality education. Also, since 2005, AKDN's ECD and primary education activities in Central Asia work to double the capacity of pre-primary and primary schools in remote provinces and provide affordable, quality and culturally sensitive curricula for children. In the crucial transition from pre-school to primary grades, AKDN pays attention to the family and community contexts and helps primary schools respond to a greater diversity of students.



READING FOR LEARNING

Reading is a key building block not just for school but for life skills. Yet many children who come from homes with no reading materials, or whose mother tongue is not the language of school instruction, face high hurdles to reading well. Research shows that if children do not read fluently after the third year of school, they likely never will. AKDN works with public education systems in East Africa and Central and South Asia on initiatives to improve how children learn to read. The Reading to Learn and Reading for Children initiatives have piloted improved reading instruction in pre-school and primary grades with better access to enjoyable, age-appropriate reading materials. AKDN brings community elders into the process as storytellers to ensure that local narratives feed the culture of reading promoted in school. AKDN also commissions local authors and illustrators to create books, for example ones that directly support messages for multicultural pluralism. These themes get reinforced by children's television programming based on those stories.

“In an age of accelerating change, when even the most sophisticated skills are quickly outdated, we will find many allies in the developing world who are coming to understand that the most important skill anyone can learn is the ability to go on learning.”

—HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN, Atlanta, Georgia, 2008



SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In places that are most vulnerable to unemployment and changes in the global workplace, AKDN helps young women and men hone the skills they need to get jobs and contribute as engaged citizens. AKDN vocational and technical education programs in Tanzania, Egypt and Central Asia link courses to labor-market dynamics. At the University of Central Asia, AKDN involves students on both sides of the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border in a university program to foster cross-border cooperation along with job skills in information technology and enterprise. In Mozambique AKDN provides training to faculty and scholarships to make the country's Bilibiza Agricultural Institute a center of excellence for sharing best practices and testing farming techniques for improved economic and environmental resilience.



HIGHER EDUCATION

The Aga Khan University (AKU), established in 1983, and the University of Central Asia (UCA) have teaching sites in more than nine countries, from Tajikistan to Tanzania. AKU, chartered in Pakistan, provides post-graduate training for health service professionals, teachers and school managers. AKU's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) has for nearly 20 years provided professional development to education professionals in Asia and Africa. In remote locations, AKU-IED brings professional development close to schools by creating professional development centers to provide training and mentoring for teachers and support school management. It also serves as a permanent base for AKDN initiatives in education. The University of Central Asia has campuses in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Its School for Professional and Continuing Education, which opened in 2006, taught 27,000 students in its first four years.

Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. leverages nearly every dollar received by matching grants from leading donor agencies, including the U.S. government, along with providing seed funding for some initiatives. This creates a multiplier effect that amplifies the impact of every donation. Our donors include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Flora Family Foundation, The Ford Foundation, International Youth Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, United States Agency for International Development, United States Department of Agriculture, United States Department of State, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A., established in 1981, is a private, non-denominational, non-profit international organization committed to the struggle against poverty, hunger, illiteracy and poor health, primarily in Africa and Asia. The Foundation works to address the root causes of poverty by supporting and sharing innovative solutions in the areas of health, education, rural development, civil society and the environment.

The Foundation is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private development agencies founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, with mandates ranging from health and education to architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprise and the revitalization of historic cities. The Network's agencies work for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion and its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society. www.akdn.org

