

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK AND THE SYNERGOS INSTITUTE
PARTNER TO IMPLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL ASIA
AS PART OF THE ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 1, 2013. Today the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) announced a grant to the Synergos Institute to work in partnership to advance social entrepreneurship in Central Asia as a path to social and economic development for the region.

Synergos and the AKDN will implement activities through the Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship, a three-year collaborative program to create and support a robust social entrepreneurship movement in select countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The Alliance currently operates in Egypt, Lebanon and now the Central Asian countries of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Formed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Synergos in collaboration with Ashoka and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, the Alliance will work with leading organizations active in social entrepreneurship globally and in these select countries. The Alliance seeks to play a critical role in raising awareness about social entrepreneurship and promoting an environment that encourages growth and greater impact of social enterprises. AKDN's grant of \$250,000 is being matched by funds from USAID and Synergos.

In the first phase, the Alliance has developed an understanding of the environments in Egypt and Lebanon to assess the viability and sustainability for social entrepreneurship. The Alliance has identified and engaged with key stakeholders, and approved a detailed plan for each country. In its second two-year phase, the Alliance will continue to build collaborations and pilot projects that address barriers for promoting and scaling up social entrepreneurship.

Dr. Mirza Jahani, CEO of the Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A., observed, "The work of the Alliance is important for understanding the enabling environment for social entrepreneurship," especially in Central Asia. "We are excited to work with Synergos and apply successful models from the Alliance's programs to Central Asia. As we help social enterprises and civil society organizations in that region to grow, these efforts create healthy and resilient societies."



The partnership has specific objectives to:

- Assess the landscape for social entrepreneurship in Central Asia, beginning with the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan
- Identify and pilot solutions to create an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship in the region, with a focus on remote mountain communities
- Build awareness of social entrepreneurship among key stakeholders in Central Asia and globally
- Integrate key AKDN programs into the global social entrepreneurship movement.

For more information about Synergos, please see: <http://www.synergos.org/>

About Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. and the Aga Khan Development Network

The Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A., established in 1981, is a private, non-denominational, not-for-profit international development organization committed to alleviating poverty, hunger, illiteracy and poor health, in the areas of health, education, rural development, civil society, and the environment. AKF USA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code.

AKF USA is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (www.akdn.org), a network of private, non-denominational, development agencies around the world, established by His Highness the Aga Khan to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, improve living conditions and opportunities. 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.

For more information about AKDN, please see: <http://www.akdn.org/usa>

For more information about the Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship, please see: <http://a4se.org/>

For more information about USAID, please see: <http://www.usaid.gov>

For more information about Ashoka, please see: <http://www.ashoka.org>

