Courtesy: Fatima Zehra Hassan (@fzh_atelier)
Renowned Contemporary Visual Artist (London Based)

Chief Bird "Hoopoe" in the "Conference of the Birds"written by Farid-ud-Din Attar a famous Persian Sufi poet in the 12th century. Hoopoe, a wise leader, guides the others through the trials with wisdom, knowledge and ability.

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Tributes To H. H. Prince Karim Aga Khan Iv

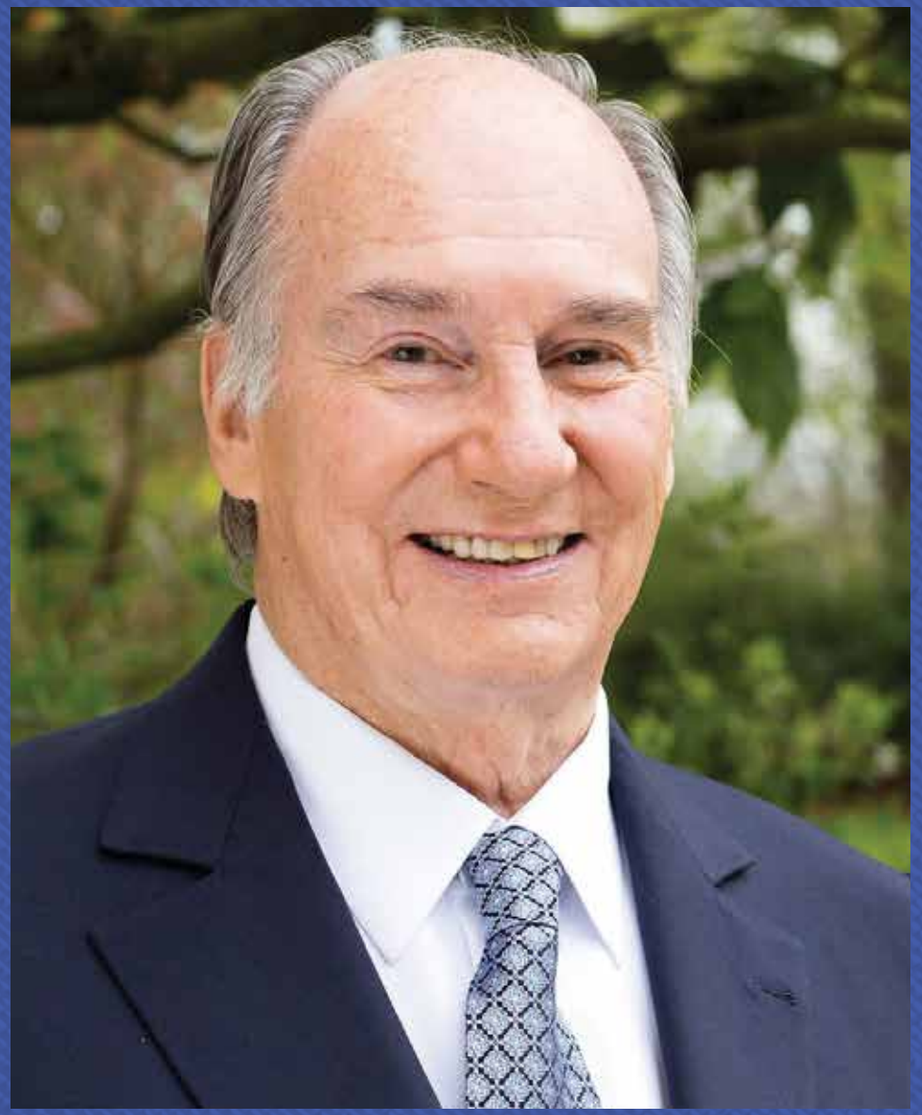
Zulfiqar Ali Meghani

TRIBUTES TO H. H. PRINCE KARIM AGA KHAN IV

Zulfiqar Ali Meghani

SPECIAL EDITION
I & II

VISION OF AGA KHAN IV



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Absolutely essential read for scholars and individulas alike.
Dr. Alnoor Abdullah
M.D. FRCPC, FACC, FFACP, FACC.
Vancouver, Canada

A life size picture of H. H. *Prince Karim Aga Khan IV is exhibited at the* MUSEUM OF HUMAN RIGHTS *in Manitoba, Canada.*
Read the article of Andrew Kosorok:
http://barkah.com/2025/03/06/your-aga-khan-my-hero-a-tribute-to-the-49th-heridita ry-imam-of-the-ismaili-muslim

AGA KHAN IV
PRINCE KARIM AL-HUSSAINI
(1936–2025)

AGA KHAN IV
PRINCE KARIM AL-HUSSAINI
1936-2025

PART I

Values and Principles can guide us in our pursuit of a meaningful and purposeful life.

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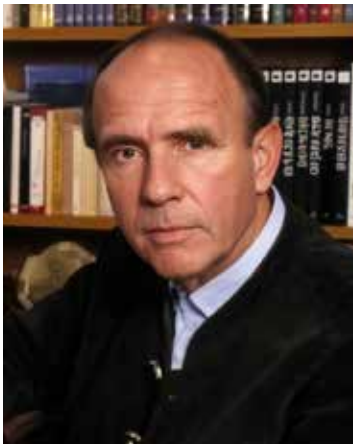
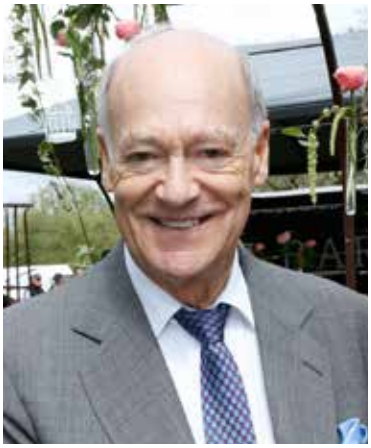

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Tributes to Aga Khan IV – Special Editions I and II

By Zulfiqar Meghani

I am humbled by the overwhelming appreciation of my book on Moral Values, with six editions resonating with diverse segments of society. Inspired by this response, and encouraged by prominent personalities touched by Aga Khan IV's legacy, I published Special Edition I of Tributes to Aga Khan IV. The global response has been heartening. I have, therefore, now published second edition of book on Tributes to Aga Khan IV which includes a comprehensive writeup on all institutions founded by him during his illustrious life. His tireless efforts demonstrate the profound impact one visionary leader can have, especially in underserved regions.

Aga Khan IV once said,

"Everyone's life is a passage, and perhaps the most one can do is to have left something behind during that passage which can contribute and assist people to look to their future with more confidence, more stability, and more hope".

His legacy shines as a beacon, guiding humanity forward. Such exceptional leaders are born once in centuries.

I extend gratitude to Mr. Anwar Rammal, Chairman, BOD, Asiatic Public Relations Network, for his guidance, help, and encouragement. I also aknowledge wholehearted cooperations from the C.E.O's/Chairmen of all the institutions under Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) to publish/print second edition of book on Tribute to Aga Khan.

H H Prince Karim Aga Khan Chairing ITREB(P) meeting in march 1976. Author seen on right side of sitting, 2nd from right in red jacket.

VOICES

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INSIDE

Aga Khan IV
A 50-Year
Retrospective by
An Indo-African
Diasporan

The Aga Khan Rural
Support Programme

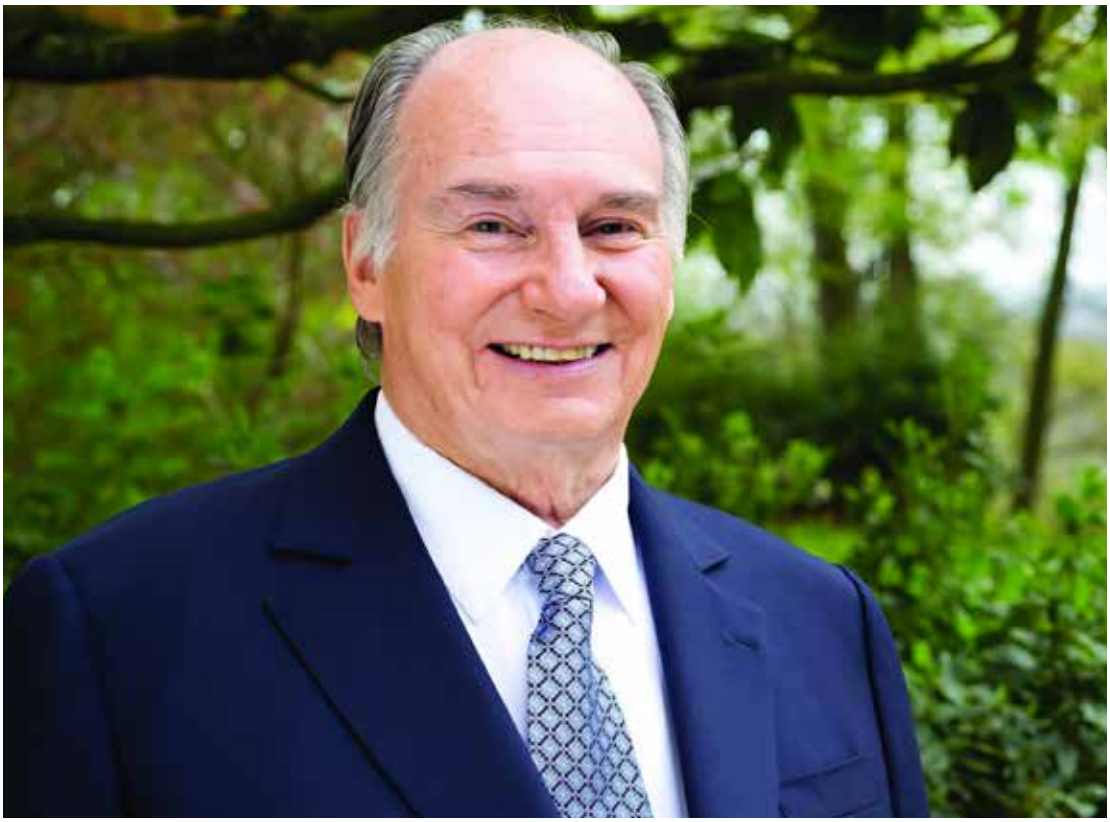
The Ismaili Centre:
A Crossroads of
Cultural Encounters

AGA KHAN IV PRINCE KARIM AL-HUSSAINI (1936–2025)

A LUMINOUS BEACON IN THE GARDEN OF TIME

Image credit: AKDN/Anya Campbell

AGA KHAN IV (1936–2025)
A Luminous Beacon in The Garden of Time



His Highness Aga Khan IV, Prince Karim al-Hussaini

His Highness Aga Khan IV, Prince Karim al-Hussaini, was born on 13 December 1936, in Geneva, son of the late Prince Aly Khan and Princess Tajuddawlah, nee Joan Yarde-Buller. He spent his early childhood in Nairobi, Kenya.

On 11 July 1957, at the age of 20, he suceeded his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III as the 49th Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslim Community. At that time he was still an undergraduate at Harvard University. He led the Ismaili community for 67 years, a period of enormous change.

In th context of his role as Imam, Aga Khan IV's concern was to interpret the faith for the Isamili Muslim community and to take a lead in Improving their quality of life as well that of the people amongst whom they live.

Tothis end, and guided by the ethical principles of Islam, he established the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private, international, non-denominaitonal agencies, working to improve living condition and opportunities for people in some of the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the developing world.

COVER STORY
Aga Khan IV (1936-2025)

The title "His Highness" was granted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1957 following the practice of earlier British monarchs who had accorded the same title to Aga Khans I, II and III.

The hereditary title "Aga Khan" (meaning "Commanding Chief") is an honorific title given by the 19th-century Persian Qajar monarch, Fath Ali Shah (r. 1797-1834), to the 46th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, Hasan Ali Shah Aga Khan I (r. 1817-1881).

Upon his accession to the Imamat, Aga Khan IV took a year away from his studies to visit his dispersed community, and then returned to education and graduated from Harvard University in 1959 with a BA Honors Degree in Islamic history.

Aga Khan IV is survived by his four children: Princess Zahra, Prince Rahim (now HH Aga Khan V}, Prince Hussain (from his first marriage to Princess Salimah, nee Sarah Frances Croker Poole) and Prince Aly Mohammed (from his second marriage to Princess Inaara, nee Gabriele Renate Thyssen); his brother Prince Amyn Mohammed and their half sister Princess Yasmin; as well as four grandchildren.

In his private life, Aga Khan IV was an accomplished skier. He also inherited the race horse stables that had been a family concern for five generations. He also had a passion for yachting and was one of the founders of the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda in northern Sardinia which he developed as a model of environmentalism.

As the leader of his community, he pioneered development agencies in the fields of health, education and income generation and went on to create the first responsible press in East Africa with the founding of The Nation newspaper as early as 1959. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) today employs approximately 96,000 people and is active in 30 countries. In the field of education, the AKDN has established the Aga Khan University (with faculties in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UK) and the University of Central Asia (with campuses in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), as well as over 200 schools (including the Aga Khan Academies in Africa and Asia) and more than 700 health facilities (including nursing schools, hospitals and associated facilities). Annually the AKDN generates electricity for 10 million people, provides healthcare to 5 million people, educates 2 million students and hosts 5 million visitors at its parks and gardens.

Through the work of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), Aga Khan IV established a museum dedicated to Muslim civilisations, the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, and founded one of the largest architectural prizes, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, now in its 16th cycle, distributing prizes totalling USD $1 million, triennially.

The Ismaili Imamat's collaboration with national governments, international public agencies and non-governmental organisations stems from a common purpose and shared values and objectives to improve the quality of life of those most in need. Although having no territory, the Ismaili Imamat has diplomatic relations with various countries and partnerships with many international and national organisations.

In recognition of his exceptional efforts and contributions to human development and improving the social condition of societies globally, Aga Khan IV received numerous decorations, honorary degrees, and award from institutions and nations across the world. He was also made an honorary citizen of Canada.

> ***"In his private life, Aga Khan IV was an accomplished skier. He also inherited the race horse stables that had been a family concern for five generations."***

At the invitation of the Government of Portugal, Aga Khan IV established the Diwan of the Ismaili Ima mat (global headquarters) in Lisbon in 2018.

Ismaili Muslims

The Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, commonly known as the Ismailis, belong to the Shia branch of Islam. The Shia form one of the two major interpretations of Islam, the Sunni being the other.

The Ismailis live in over 35 different countries, mainly in Central, East and South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North America and Australia, and number approximately 12 to 15 million.

Throughout their 1,400 year history, the Ismail is have been led by a living, hereditary Imam from the time of the first Imam Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed (may peace be upon him).

Upon his accession, Aga Khan IV reminded Ismailis to give their secular loyalty to the states in which they lived, and their spiritual loyalty to Islam and its Shia Imami Ismaili persuasion (tariqa). He also enjoined them to embrace pluralism by building bridges of peace and understanding; and generously sharing their time, talents, and material resources to improve the quality of life of the societies and communities amongst whom they live.

Ismailis affectionately refer to their incumbant spiritual leader by the title "Mawlana Hazar Imam" (Our Revered Present and Living Imam).

His Highness the Aga Khan IV on his way to Government House. Nairobi, Kenya, 1959. Image courtesy AKDN

Aga Khan IV meets President John F. Kennedy in the White House, Oval Office. Washington O.C., USA, 1961, on the eve of independence for various countries in Africa. They shared a common concern about development in post-colonial societies. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV with President Kenyatta of Kenya at the Kenyatta Day celebrations, Nairobi, Kenya, 1966. Aga Khan IV committed the services of his development institutions to improve the lot of the citizens of the newly independent states of East Africa. He established The Nation newspaper in Kenya, which provided a platform for the aspirations of Black Africans. Credit Nation Foto. Image courtesy AKDN

Aga Khan IV developed some of the best schools in Africa and Asia and made good education the basis of his vision for a more equitable future and better race relations. Here he greets students on a visit to the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa, Kenya, 2006. Image courtesy AKDN

Aga Khan IV went on developing his educational vision that went beyond the political emancipation of the East African countries, and created two universities, one of which established faculties in East Africa and is today at the heart of human-resource training for the entire East African region. Here he is seen wearing the traditional robe of the Chancellor of the Aga Khan University (AKU) in Karachi, Pakistan, 1996. Image courtesy AKDN

Aga Khan IV and Ahmed Mohammed Ag Hamani, Prime Minister of Mali, at the 14th-century Djingareyber Mosque (designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988) in Timbuktu, Mali, 10 October 2003. Aga Khan IV's concern for preserving and restoring the heritage of Muslim countries included a strong educational component which is today embodied by institutions such as the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU) and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London inter alia. Credit: Gary Otte, Image courtesy AKDN

Aga Khan IV's concern for women's education extended to the remotest areas of the world. In this picture he is greeted by student midwives at the Bamyan Hospital, Afghanistan, 2005. The education of females was a commitment he inherited from his grandfather. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV, with the bust and medal of the Andrew Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy Award. He saw philanthropic work as the central remit of his role as Imam. Photographed in Edinburgh, Scotland, 2005. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV with His Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan (left) and His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum (right) at the opening ceremony of The Ismaili Centre, Dubai, 26 March 2008. Image courtesy AKDN.

University of Cambridge Chancellor, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, and Vice Chancellor, Professor Alison Richard, with Aga Khan IV and other honorary degree recipients. Cambridge, UK, June 2009. Cambridge University and the University of Central Asia have a partnership that includes a scholarship programme for master's and doctoral students. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV, wearing the robe of the Imamat at his Golden Jubilee visit to London, UK, 2008. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV delivers a historic address to a joint session of the Parliament of Canada. Ottawa, Canada, 27 February 2014. Aga Khan IV called Canada "an exemplary leader in the global effort to foster peace, prosperity and equality through pluralism. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV meeting with United Nation's Secretary General Ant6nio Guterres at the UN offices. New York, USA, 18 October 2017. AKDN enjoys partnership with a number of UN organisations. Image courtesy AKDN.

Aga Khan IV with Queen Elizabeth II at a function hosted at Windsor Castle in honour of his Diamond Jubilee. London, UK, 7 March 2018.
Credit: Gary Otte. Courtesy AKDN.

HM King Charles III, then Prince of Wales, and HH Aga Khan IV at Buckingham Palace, London, UK, March 2019. The two shared a passion for architecture, pluralism and faith. Image courtesy AKDN.

Message From Secretary General

of the Hague Conference on Private International Law
Christophe Bernasconi

We mourn the passing of such remarkable leader – one who dedicated his life to the pursuit of knowledge, unity and the betterment of humanity. May his wisdom and legacy continue to inspire and guide.

In July 1957 when Prince Karim Aga Khan IV succeeded his grandfather Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan 111 as Imam (spiritual leader) of some 15 million Ismaili Muslims worldwide, massive changes were taking place in the world. In Africa the "Wind of Change", referring to the decolonisation process, was blowing across the continent. The Soviet Union had launched Sputnik 1 which ushered in the space age giving rise to a major geopolitical rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union- a factor that was going to have a major impact on Africa in the years to come.

The Ismailis in East Africa spread out in 4 countries, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar were part of the larger Asian minority numbering some 360,000 whose fate was undecided in the new unfolding political drama. Here the Aga Khan's remit as Imam was to secure the wellbeing of his followers both spiritually and in terms of the quality of their lives. His advice was simple: they owed their secular allegiance to the countries responsible for their wellbeing while their spiritual allegiance was to Islam and its Shia Imami Ismaili persuasion. At a micro level his advice to parents was pragmatic. "Put your children to bed by 7pm each day", reminding them of the value of good sleep and rest for growing children. He exhorted good education for their children (both boys and girls) and stressed that particular attention be paid to basic health care. The years ahead were spent in upgrading the numerous initiatives and institutions in social and economic development which were pioneered by his grandfather under the old colonial systems and which needed revamping to meet the requirements of the new nation states yet to be born. In this process education played a key role.

New multi-racial, co-educational secondary schools were built staffed by some of the best teachers from everywhere. Aga Khan 1V built the first multi-racial hospital in Kenya which would go on to become a leading teaching hospital in the years to come.

What is remarkable is that during his immediate sabbatical from Harvard University, Aga Khan 1V visited his far flung community across the world even going to Hunza in the Northern Areas of Pakistan bordering on China. In certain inaccessible areas he went on donkey back. His concern did not stop just with the Ismaili community. He realised that the plight of marginalisation was endemic to the whole region and as Imam his remit extended to all those among whom his community lived and who were in need. Over the years he established the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) which went on to become the model for rural development in many countries of the world.

A global visionary who thought in mutigenerational terms, Aga Khan IV underpinned his vision with practical action combined with deep philosophical reflection. He was a great listener and was always ready to consult, realising-that people themselves were the best judges of their needs and that giving them agency was the most effective way of guaranteeing their progress. He ignited their spirit of hope and determination. All his programmes embraced this hallmark in addition to basic care for the environment.

Aga Khan IV did not view human developments in simple binary terms and approached the decolonisation process in East Africa with great empathy throwing his lot in with the African governments by trying to understand their predicament in dismantling the colonial systems that they had inherited in which the Black people were systemically deprived on the basis of their race. At the same time, he saw the predicament of the Asian minority communities as a fault line issue to the extent that they were unfairly seen as prosperous middle men in the economy, imported by colonial governments and perceived as blocking the upward mobility of the aspirations of the majority of the indigenous people. Here, he was adept at thinking in pareto-optimal terms in enlarging the pie so that more people could benefit from it. He did this firstly, by ensuring greater African articulation of their political aspirations on a platform which they could genuinely call their own. For this he established the Nation Newspaper Group in 1959 in response to an observation made to him by the then leading political activist in the Kenyan freedom movement, the late Tom Mboya. Aga Khan IV was not sparing in introducing the state of the art printing technology, the web offset, making Kenya the first Black African country to have access to this technology at that time. The Nation Group thus became an important regional media organisation ready to play its role in nation-building activities. He gave local shareholders a stake in the enterprise and the newspaper went on to play an important role in the engendering of a culture of responsible reporting in East Africa. The media endeavour also became a fore runner to the Graduate School of Media and Communications of the Aga Khan University which he developed in the years to come.

Secondly, and importantly, Aga Khan IV advised his followers to relinquish the retail trade which was the main bone of contention with the majority of the populace; He encouraged his followers to go into small scale industrial enterprises through the Industrial Promotion Services (IPS) which he then set up and which went on to become part of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) which today is the main arm of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) with regard to economic development activities globally.

Thirdly, and equally critically, he advised his followers

“ The Nation Group thus became an important regional media organisation ready to play its role in nation-building activities. ”

to take up local citizenship and make each of these countries of East Africa their home which a large majority did. He advised his followers to access the best education they could muster locally and also aim for higher education overseas. A longitudinal thinker he encouraged pluralistic dialogue from the beginning and shared a common concern about just and equitable development with leading global thinkers of the time, one of whom happened to be a Canadian visionary called Pierre Elliott Trudeau whom he befriended over the years.

The post-colonial hope in East Africa was severely undermined by local tensions engendered by geopolitical rivalries and the hoped for East African Federation which the various nations aspired for, never materialised. In 1971 there was a coup in Uganda with the emergence of Dictator Idi Amin who on 4 August 1972 passed an edict giving the 80,000 Asians of Uganda an ultimatum to leave the country within 90 days. Ismailis, who formed a minority of this group, were largely citizens of Uganda. Regardless of this fact, Amin's decree held and it was at that point in time that the Canadian government, which had begun to change its immigration policy, decided to admit people from non-European areas of the world.

Here, the Aga Khan was able to leverage his connection with Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and through the Ismaili community and its organisational structure in Uganda help the Canadian team in Uganda hasten the process of Ugandan Asian resettlement in Canada. The Ismaili volunteers in Canada, many of whom had only recently arrived in the country, were able to muster local support to help displaced persons who had just arrived. In this context what is not much known is the unique role the Aga Khan and his uncle Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the then UN High Commissioner for refugees, played in devising what the UN refers to today as "alternative pathways to resettlement". These endeavours over time helped Ismailis as well as other displaced Asians to settle mainly in the countries of the Western hemisphere.

Aga Khan IV advised his community in Canada on his first official visit to the country in 1978 to make Canada their definitive home. He advised his younger followers, both girls and boys, to take the best education that Canada was able to offer. But he also reminded them that in the years to come he would call upon them to play a contributory role in the development of societies which were less privileged than theirs. He told them that he will call upon their time through the institutions of the Imamat. Today some 50 years later many Ismailis who arrived as displaced persons are playing an important civic role at the highest echelons of the Canadian government and are also involved with-the Aga Khan University which has faculties in 6 countries- three of which are in East Africa. Ismailis and others also serve through the AKDN the global network dedicated to improving the quality of life of those in need mainly in Asia and Africa irrespective of their origin, faith or gender.

The Aga Khan IV's vision was always underpinned by a deep sense of self-effacement. Asked by one of the leading Canadian TV journalists Roy Bonisteel how he would like his legacy to be remembered one day, his response after a moment of deep reflection was categorical. "Not by face or by name" but if the projects he was setting up were to benefit those for whom they were meant, then his life will have been fulfilled. His successor, his eldest son, His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan succeeded him as the 50th hereditary Imam of the Ismaili Muslims worldwide. As Aga Khan V, Prince Rahim has committed himself to serve his widely dispersed community spread today in some 35 countries of the world through a network his late father built and with which he has been closely associated for the past two decades.

Maritious long life services rendered to Imam of the time and Jamat, by community leaders. Role models for younger generation to follow their footsteps.

Aga Khan IV (1936–2025)
A Luminous Beacon in The Garden of Time

By **Matise Ruthven** (former journalist with the BBC World Service, lecturer at universities on both sides of the Atlantic and author of books on Islam, including Islam in the World)

Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV was a man of remarkable paradoxes: a sultan without territory, a billionaire socialite and real-estate developer who eschewed a life of ease, a newspaper proprietor who permitted unconditional editorial freedom, a spiritual leader who urged his followers to seek questions rather than answers, and a polymath who mastered many disciplines without showing conceit or intellectual arrogance. What I believe set him apart from many other prominent figures in an era dominated by narcissistic celebrity cults was the unusual combination of personal modesty with his appetite for knowledge. Although he didn't preach or talk about it much, I believe his attitude to life and leadership were deeply rooted in the Ismailis tradition that sees faith as being the quest for knowledge rather than just obedience to divine commands.

When setting up the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, for example, he did not just hire prominent architects. He sent two young researchers around the world to interrogate the idea of Muslim architecture in a cultural domain stretching from the arid realms of the Maghreb to the tropics of Indonesia. Rather than seeing architecture as the mere construction of buildings, he saw it as an engine of development that would serve as a remedy for problems of cultural and social dislocation afflicting not just Muslim countries, but many parts of the developing world.

Consistent with his questioning approach to architecture, he chose the art historian Oleg Grabar to steer the award rather than more obvious theorists such as the late Keith Critchlow or Seyyed Hossein Nasr who regarded the supposedly sacred dimensions of Islamic design as aesthetic expressions of faith. Unlike other architectural prizes, such as the celebrity-stoking Pritzker whose laureates have been hired by the Saudi government to transform the north-west Arabian landscape with spectacular giga-projects, the Award relies on a network of architects, planners and sociologists who nominate projects anonymously using standardized dossiers to minimize bias. The dossiers, assessed by technical experts, not only document actual buildings, but supply the data base for what is now one of the world's leading online architectural resources. As Aga Khan IV himself explained the value of the Award was not so much to honour 'final, definitive solutions to be replicated', but to 'enrich debate' and generate excitement. Winners of the Award have included hitech buildings like the iconic Kuwait Water Towers or Jean Nouvel's Institute du Monde Arabe in Paris, but equal if not more attention has always been given to small-scale projects using local materials and enlisting the skills and energies of local people.

A project that received an award in Doha where I was present in 2010 was the Bridge School

linking two parts of a village in western China. The village had long been divided by a deep gorge making communications between the two halves difficult and challenging. Constructed from steel with a cladding of local timber, the bridge-cum-building houses a primary school, public library and social centre beneath which the halves are now linked by a pedestrian bridge, while the school section can be adapted for public performances. As the Award citation stated: 'the result is a project that has successfully invigorated the entire community, encapsulating social sustainability through architectural intervention'.

One could cite numerous commendations of similar calibre made to Award winners in the 45 years since the Award began. But the Bridge School seems especially emblematic, exemplifying as it does the multi-faceted dimension of the approach of Aga Khan IV. The building's emergence after anonymous evaluation by experts is the opposite of the custom of hiring celebrity architects that prevails in many oil-rich states. The evaluation process was devised by Prince Karim himself, who, after sending his researchers around the world to explore what might constitute Muslim architecture, devoted many hours to examining the dossiers. The process is in obvious contrast to what might be called the current culture of narcissism-flattery rampant in parts of the Muslim world, in which highly-paid consultants tell their wealthy clients what they want to hear and studios rake in millions making models, videos and replicas of these fantasies. Prince Karim was the opposite of many of today's mega-rich commissioners of consultants. A meticulous note-taker from his student days at Harvard, he was well-known for keeping consultants in every field on their toes, having briefed himself thoroughly about their projects.

The Bridge School's double function connects directly with two of his leading passions: bridging the social, religious and political boundaries that separate different strands of humanity, and creating a path to human flourishing through the acquisition of knowledge. His passion for bridging the political, social and cultural gaps that afflict human beings was exemplified by the construction in 2002 of a suspension bridge across the Panj River between Tajikistan and Afghanistan that for decades, (since the communist revolution of 1917) had marked the boundary not only between Soviet Tajikistan and Afghanistan, but the cold war division between the Eastern and Western blocs. The gap may now be widening, following the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan in 2021, but the bridge remains a vital symbol of hope.

"The right to hope", Aga Khan IV declared, "is the most powerful human motivation I know." Beyond the construction of bridges, hope can be seen as the energy animating what will doubtless come to be seen as his most enduring legacy, the Aga Khan Development Network. Originating in the cluster of institutions established by his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III to serve the needs of the Ismaili community in India and East Africa, the AKDN was vastly expanded under Aga Khan IV to provide health, educational and cultural services to people of all faiths and backgrounds in the countries where it operates, as well as to stimulate development through socially productive enterprises.

Aga Khan IV explained his Network's spiritual rationale at the opening of a housing centre I visited in Mumbai. The complex contained 2 and 3-bedroom flats with kitchens and bathrooms, overlooking pleasant communal gardens and a resident's centre with an extensive library of books, video-tapes and DVDs. Many of the Ismaili families and others who lived there were rural migrants from Gujerat who had previously been living in the baking-hot, fetid shacks of Dharavi, one of the most notorious South Asian shanty-towns, where the air was thick with dust and children played in streets full of running sewage. "There are those", Aga Khan IV explained, "who enter this world in such poverty that they are deprived of both the means and the motivation to improve their lot. Unless [they) can be touched with the spark which ignites the spirit of individual enterprise and determination, they will only sink back into renewed apathy, degradation and despair. It is for us who are more fortunate to provide that spark." To me Aga

Khan IV's reference to the 'spark' suggested that it is a psychological boost of hope and enablement rather than material help in the form of charity that would help people raise themselves out of poverty. He always disliked being called a 'philanthropist' (although the word features in many media obituaries). He saw it as linked to the top-down dispensing of charity rather than creative engagement with people of different faiths and levels of development. While some religious traditions regard dispensing charity along with the renunciation of wealth and comfort as being spiritually desirable, honouring poverty as the antidote to crass materialism of modern cultures, Aga Khan IV saw the grinding squalor in which the poorest found themselves as fundamental obstacles to human - and spiritual - progress. He saw the alleviation of poverty as part of his remit as Imam.

> ***"People might ask how, as one of the world's wealthiest men, he could talk about poverty without having experienced it himself."***

People might ask how, as one of the world's wealthiest men, he could talk about poverty without having experienced it himself. "I'm very spoilt", Aga Khan IV once said to me when I complimented him on a Breughel painting in his Paris residence. In an era that demands equality of opportunity (without being able to deliver it) the charity-dispensing activities of the rich and famous may be easily be dismissed as a form of 'charity-washing' aimed at diverting public attention from the lack of symmetry between the ultra-wealthy and ordinary folk. The critique may often be justified, but it takes little account of the fact that in the real world wealth usually equals power, either directly through the allocation of resources and power of appointment, or indirectly through the access to power that such wealth provides. As Adrienne Clarkson stated shortly after leaving office as Governor-General of Canada:

People would ask me 'Who is the most remarkable person you have met?' and I would say 'The Aga Khan!' People don't really understand that, because there is the worldly side, there is the man who appears at Ascot, Chantilly, at the races, and has that life. But there is also this other side, and that is something which I think that Ismailis understand. You don't have to give up the world in order to have a true spiritual foundation to your life'

As a wealthy individual with royal status, the Aga Khan had access to other world leaders, enabling him to cut through political or bureaucratic obstacles in furtherance of his aims and duties. The best-known example was the way he was able to get his friend, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, to assist resettling Ismailis in Canada after the dictator Idi Amin's expulsion of Asians from Uganda in 1972. But there are numerous other examples, including the construction of the bridge across the Panj already mentioned. It could not have been achieved without enlisting the personal support of Tajikistan's president, Emomali Rahmon.

The Aga Khan's wealth enabled him to take 'out-of-the-box' decisions far beyond the means of other development agencies. For example, some of the network staffers who had been reared in NGOs with anti-tech or 'small-is-beautiful' cultures were resistant to his insistence on introducing helicopters (on his own account) in the Himalayan regions of Northern Pakistan, until they realised that being spared the debilitating drudgery of endless jeep drives on perilous mountain tracks enabled their organization the AKRSP (Aga Khan Rural Support Program) to maximise its small cadre of highly trained professionals. The Program which, typically, he adapted from a model pioneered in the former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) by Akhtar Hameed Khan and Shoaib Sultan Khan, is now seen as the world's most successful system for bringing rural people out of poverty by empowering them through their own initiatives consensually crafted.

Wealth and status did not just enable Aga Khan IV to cut through bureaucratic or political obstacles to his vision for human development. They made it possible for his Network to undertake projects that many people would consider far down the scale of priorities, especially in regions lacking food secirity, not to mention physical safety. The creation of a beautiful public garden from a Cairo rubbish pit - a project that required moving several million tonnes of earth, alongside challenging decades of government inertia - stands as a brilliant example, as did his risky decision to restore the Bagh-e Babur park in Kabul. The beautiful gardens that he engendered in Cairo, Kabul, Khorog (Tajikistan), Bamako (Mali), and other cities I have visited, as well as those surrounding the stunning Jamatkhana buildings I have seen in Lisbon, London and Burnaby-Vancouver, are - like all great Islamic gardens foretastes of the vision of paradise promised to believers. But even to the sceptic they serve as calming oases of tranquillity and hope in our increasingly unstable and precarious world.

> ***"The Aga Khan's wealth enabled him to take 'out-of-the-box' decisions far beyond the means of other development agencies."***

Bridge School, Northern China. AKDN

Faith Leader And Humanitarian Institution Builder,
Aga Khan IV Lived The Social Conscience of Islam

By Sada Cumber- US-based entrepreneur, philathropist and diplomat, First US Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Prince Karim al-Hussaini, known to the world as His Highness Aga Khan IV and the 49th hereditary Imam of the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam, the second largest Shia community in the world, passed away on 4 February at the age of 88. The world lost a preeminent Muslim leader, humanitarian, diplomat, scholar, and passionate advocate for humanity's potential. Aga Khan IV's death has been widely covered in world media, which may seem extraordinary considering he never held a formal political office or governed territory of his own. But Aga Khan IV led a remarkable life and has left an exceptional legacy.

Born in Switzerland in 1936, Prince Karim was educated at Harvard. His grandfather, Aga Khan III, understood how quickly the world was changing. He believed only someone who understood the postCold War's emerging challenges and opportunities could lead the Ismaili Muslim community and rise to the broader demands placed upon an Imam toward all humanity. From his succession in 1957, the newly minted Aga Khan IV quickly set about proving the wisdom of his grandfather's choice.

Readers may be familiar with Aga Khan IV for many reasons. He helped facilitate the historic 1985 Geneva summit between US President Ronald Reagan and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, which was held at his residence in Geneva. Some may know him for leveraging his personal, moral, and spiritual authority to help tens of thousands of South Asians, expelled from Uganda by dictator Idi Amin in 1972, find new homes and new lives in the West. And many may know him for his prominence in the days and weeks after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

A lifelong advocate of pluralism, tolerance and understanding, with special emphasis on the relationship between the Muslim World and the West, 11 September and its aftermath embodied all that Aga Khan IV feared in that relationship. Following the attacks on New York, he often went on record vociferously condemning the misus Islam to justify violence. This was not a new position for him, but one that gained new-found urgency. At the same time, he took aim at the broader context which had allowed the relationship between the West and Muslim World to grow so toxic.

Aga Khan IV became a leading advocate for the idea that a 'Clash of Ignorance' was responsible for that troubled relationship, offering it in opposition to the 'Clash of Civilizations' idea that was much in vogue at that time. Later, when Pope Benedict XVI made remarks widely perceived as Islamophobic, Aga Khan IV worked to tamp down tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities, while encouraging leaders to learn from the history of the time when Islamic and European cultures "interacted constructively and creatively - to help realize some of civilization's peak achievements." Through support for initiatives such as the Amman Message, Aga Khan IV also reminded Muslims of the importance of

tolerance and pluralism within their own faith. While never presuming to impose his position as Imam to tell non-Ismaili Muslims how to interpret their faith, he enjoined all Muslims to approach their faith with reason, compassion, and understanding. Or, as he put it, to live the "social conscience" of Islam.

His spiritual duties carried an obligation to the whole of humanity, especially its most marginalized and disadvantaged. He created the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). an umbrella organization of agencies, to uplift the poorest of the poor through education, development, and social justice. AKDN operates in 30 countries, employs nearly 100,000 people, and deploys a $1 billion annual budget for economic and cultural development.

Implicit in many tributes to Aga Khan IV, which I wish to make explicit, was his gift as an institution builder. Aga Khan IV understood that institutions are the primary structures through which society organizes, operates, performs essential functions, and effects meaningful change. In this capacity, the AKDN is certainly his masterpiece, but it stands alongside many others created over seven decades and which he continued to refine and strengthen right up to his last days. These include two university systems, 200 schools, and 700 hospitals and health facilities.

In conformity with historical Shia Ismaili tradition and Aga Khan IV's decree, his son, Prince Rahim al-Hussaini, has succeeded him as the 50th Ismaili Imam. Born in 1971, Prince Rahim Aga Khan V was educated at Brown University. He has held active leadership roles within the AKDN, including chairing its budget review and environment and climate committees, and across other institutions of the Imamat.

> ***"Aga Khan IV understood that institutions are the primary structures through which society organizes, operates, performs essential functions, and effects meaningful change."***

AKDN operates in 30 countries, employs nearly 100,000 people, and deploys a $1 billion annual budget for economic and cultural development.
In recent years, Prince Rahim Aga Khan V frequently accompanied his father to high-level meetings and events. Later, he often served as the public face for his father's initiatives. Through those experiences, Aga Khan IV created a unique mentorship for his successor, preparing him for the duties and obligations which are now his. Through this preparation and through his own qualities, I believe Prince Rahim Aga Khan V will continue to make the office of the Imamat a credit to humanity and a force for peace, pluralism, and human dignity.

As for his late father, after a remarkable life of 88 years, Aga Khan IV leaves us with a world that is better for his time in it.

Aga Khan IV with Ambassador Sada Cumber in a happy mood

His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV (1936-2025)

By **Masooda Bano**, Professor of Development Studies and Senior Researcher at Brasenose College, Oxford, Department of International Development

His Highness Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV, the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, passed away peacefully in Lisbon on 4 February 2025 at the age of 88. His death marks the end of an era of exceptional leadership, philanthropy and dedication to the betterment of humanity. A direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him and his progeny) through his daughter, Hazrat Bibi Fatima, and the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Hazrat Ali, Prince Karim embodied a lineage that has provided guidance to the Ismaili community for over 1,400 years.

Aga Khan IV succeeded to the Imamat at the young age of 20 in 1957, following the death of his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III. his stewardship, the Ismaili Muslim community flourished, embracing modernity while remaining rooted in their faith and heritage. His global influence as a statesman and spiritual leader saw him advocate for the role of Islam in fostering peace, pluralism, and human development.

In addition to being widely respected as a religious leader, Aga Khan IV's greatest legacy may well be the vast humanitarian and development initiatives he established. He founded the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), one of the largest private development organizations in the world. AKDN operates in more than 30 countries in Africa and Asia employing over 96,000 people and investing more than $1 billion annually in programmes aimed at improving healthcare, education, economic opportunities, cultural restoration, and environmental sustainability. The education and health care programmes run by the AKDN reach remote communities with limited resources, such as the mountainous terrains of the Northern Areas of Pakistan and the deprived communities in Zanzibar.

> ***"The Aga Khan Education Services (AKES), a key agency within the AKDN network, invests significantly in girls' education, just as its primary health programme prioritizes maternal and child health."***

Furthermore, across these initiatives, Aga Khan IV was deeply committed to ensuring that women had equal access. The Aga Khan Education Services (AKES), a key agency within the AKDN invests significantly in girls' education, just as its prim health programme prioritizes maternal and child health. As early as 1918, his grandfather emphasized the importance of educating girls, stating, "If you have two children-a girl and a boy-educate the girl first. When you educate a boy, you educate an individual, but when you educate a girl, you educate a family." He dedicated the proceeds from his jubilee celebrations to building schools for girls. Aga Khan IV continued this commitment by expanding access to higher education for girls from remote areas through providing university access. As a result, hundreds of

young women became nurses and doctors, many of them training at the Aga Khan University (AKU) and improving their families' quality of life.

Aga Khan IV's contribution to institution-building, however was not limited to the developing world. He was a strong advocate of pluralism. Recognizing the fractures within societies due to sectarianism and intolerance, he championed institutions such as the Global Centre for Pluralism in Canada. At the inauguration of the Centre's headquarters in 2017, he remarked, "Connection does not necessarily mean agreement. It does not mean that we want to eliminate our differences or erase our distinctions. Far from it. What it does mean is that we connect with one another in order to learn from one another and to build our future together." His relationship with Canada was especially significant, dating back to the 1970s when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau welcomed thousands of Ismaili refugees from Uganda. This bond remained strong throughout his lifetime.

In an era when Islam is often misrepresented or misunderstood, Aga Khan IV sought to highlight its intellectual, philosophical, and artistic richness. He firmly believed that Islamic civilization had contributed immensely to world heritage and should be acknowledged as a source of beauty, wisdom, and knowledge. Consequently, exhibitions and conferences organized by the Ismaili Centres worldwide as well as by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, highlight the deeply mystical, philosophical, rationalist dimensions of Islamic heritage.

Similarly, through the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), Aga Khan IV championed the preservation of Islamic architecture and urban regeneration projects, ensuring that historic sites and communities were revitalized rather than neglected. One of the most notable projects under his patronage was the development of the Al-Azhar Park in Cairo. Opened in 2005, this 30-hectare park transformed a former rubbish dump into a green oasis, providing much-needed recreational green space for the people of Cairo.

Aga Khan IV's leadership was characterized by humility and an unwavering commitment to service. He often described his role not in terms of power, but as a responsibility entrusted to him by his faith and community. He inspired generations of Ismailis to actively engage in voluntary service, a principle deeply ingrained within the community through institutions such as the Ismaili Volunteer Corps. As Imam, Aga Khan IV viewed the promotion of social justice as an essential duty of his office, not as an option.

“In an era when Islam is often misrepresented or misunderstood, Aga Khan IV sought to highlight its intellectual, philosophical, and artistic richness.”

On 9 February 2025, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV was laid to rest in Aswan, Egypt, in a private ceremony. Aswan holds deep significance for the late Imam's family, as it is the final resting place of his grandfather, Aga Khan III, and his step-grandmother, Mata Salamat Om Habibeh. Their bond with the people of Aswan remained strong through the years, sustained by the work of the Om Habibeh Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation.

With his death, the mantle of leadership has now transitioned to Aga Khan IV's eldest son, His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan, who as Aga Khan V has been named the 50th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

Al-Azhar Park, Cairo, Egypt - AKDN

HH Aga Khan IV-A 50-Year Retrospective

By an Indoafrican Diasporan

By **Vinod Tailor** MBE (former High Sherif of Bedfordshire, supporting various voluntary sectors for the alleviation of poverty, Trustee of Peace Child International)

It was July 1957 and I was yet to be born in a small village in Eastern Uganda called Kaberamaido which even today is not known by many. Its population then was no more than a thousand. My father was a humble tailor - hence my name "Tailor". Like in many other towns of East Africa there was a small Ismaili jamatkhana nearby which had some very basic facilities. It was run by a teacher called Aly Mohammed Master who also happened to teach in the government school at which I was a pupil. Looking back as I grew up, I came to realise that 1957 was a significant year. The decolonisation process "Wind of Change" was taking place across Africa and the Soviet Union had launched its first satellite called Sputnik1. We had entered the space age. It was against this backdrop that Sir Su ltan Ma homed Shah Aga Khan III, Imam (spiritual leader) of the world's 12 million Ismaili Muslims, passed away having appointed his 20-yea r -old grandson Prince Karim, then an undergraduate at Harvard Un ivers ity, as Aga Khan IV, the 49 th hered itary Imam of the Ismaili Muslims worldwide. Aga Khan III wanted a young man to succeed him as the Imam of the Atomic Age.

Ou r l ife in the village was simple. My father lived a hand to mouth existence. I was the eldest of two boys and we had three sisters. East Africa was beginning to feel the effect of the "Wind of Change". The Asian minority felt extremely vulnerable as African nationalism became more strident and viewed the Asian shopkeeper as blocking their upward mobility. Aga Khan 1 V deferred his studies at Harvard Un iversity and took over a year off as a kind of sabbatical to reorient his life towards redeem ing his pledge to his commun ity whom he undertook to serve. In this retrospective, I reflect on how Aga Khan IV impacted my life as a non-Ismail and my multiple identities. I realise now that he was not only an Imam to the Ismailis but he was also the voice of the voiceless of whom I was one.

Aga Khan IV as one who navigated the "Wind of Change"

At a time when some 360,000 Asians in four East African countries were wondering whether to stay in East Africa or to leave, Aga Khan IV advised his community to take up local citizenship. But this was not as an expedient. He advised them to live simply, educate their children, and contribute towards nation-building in the moment of post-colonial hope. In his vision for a new Africa he was not alone but found a kindred spirit in a dynamic Canadian whose cosmopolitan vison was resonant - Pierre Elliott Trudeau who would later serve two terms as the Prime Minister of Canada, As fate would have it they became good friends.

Connection with India

Desp ite the Ismai Imamat in the last millenium being a-territoria l, Ismailis have a very strong sense of

belonging and deep bonds with their Imam regardless of how geographically scattered they may be. India for most diasporic Ismail is who lived in Africa was their cultural background. Aga Khan IV's greatgreat-grandfather (Aga Hassanaly Shah Aga Khan I) came to India in 1846 and established his residence first in Calcutta and subsequently in Bombay. His son (Aga Ali Shah, Aga Khan II) succeeded him and he in turn was succeeded by Aga Khan III who rose to eminence as India's representative to the the various Round Table conferences between 1930-1932 that aimed to determine the future political shape of India. Aga Khan III left India in the 1930s and went on to become the President of the League of Nations (the forerunner to the United Nations) a position he held for two terms.

> ***"they became good fri ends. He advised them to live simply, educate their children, and contribute towards nation-building in the moment of post-colonial hope."***

Aga Khan IV consolidated the social welfare activities of his community in India in 1980 when he established the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) India whose first Chairman was Indian diplomat Rajeshwar Dayal. Through the AKF, Aga Khan IV established the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) India that has for the past 40 years been serving the most marginalised sections of the population- mostly nonIsmailis. Enlisting the engagement of outstanding Indian visionaries such as the industrialist Sir Rattan Tata and the leading Indian architect Charles Correa, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), the umbrella organisation under which all developmental activities are conducted today, has been involved in activities ranging from early childhood and general education, health care, rural development and economic activities to major cultural regeneration programmes such as the restoration of the tomb of Humayun and the Sunder Nursery in New Delhi. It must be noted that Aga Khan IV in 1969 donated the Yerwada Palace, which was owned by his grandfather and where Mahatma Gandhi was once incarcerated, to the Indian Government. The building today houses the Gandhi Museum.

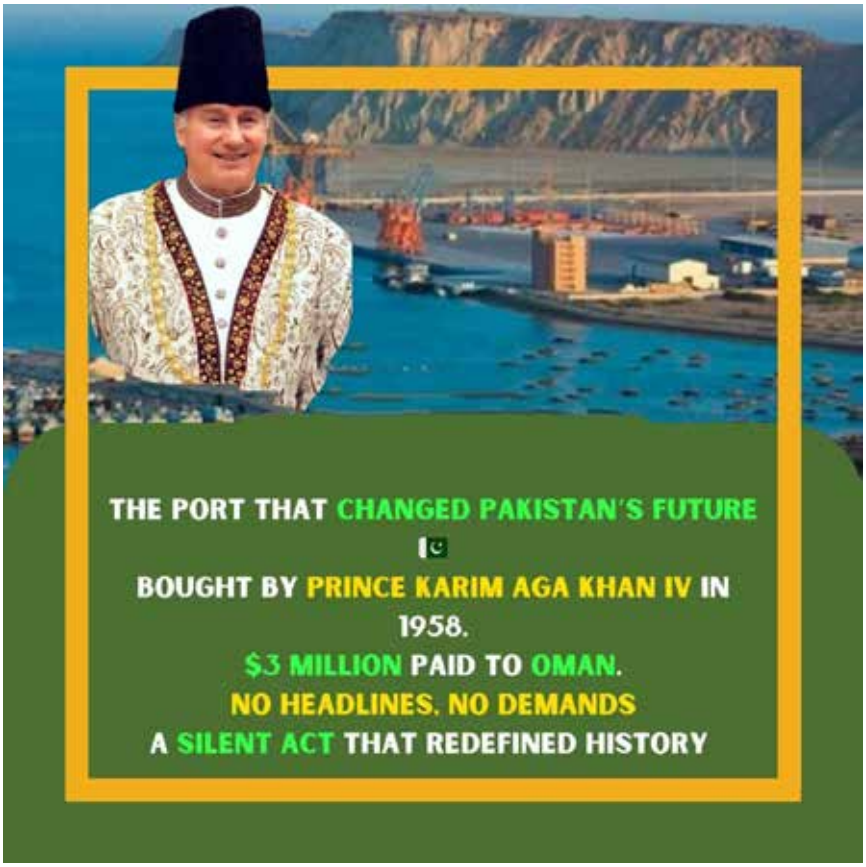
While Aga Khan IV was advising his own community to play a constructive role in East Africa, sadly, the conditions in post-independence East Africa changed radically as a result of various factors including Cold War politics in which the region became embroiled. Ideological differences became problematic, resulting inter alia in the 1972 expulsion by Idi Amin of some 80,000 Asians from Uganda with just a 90- day notice. I was a mere 15-year-old boy at the time. I did not have much education. Various countries to which the Asians were affiliated in some way or the other, renounced their responsibility for the Asians of East Africa who became in political economist Yash Tandon's words 'stepchildren of the colonial empire'. We were desperate, penniless. We had no hope whatsoever. It was at that time that Aga Khan IV and his uncle Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the longest serving UN High Commissioner for Refugees, elaborated what is known as 'alternative pathways to resettlement' to help people like myself. Aga Khan 1V was able to enlist the support of the Canadian Government through Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and Canada opened its doors to an unprecedented wave of non-white immigration. Prince Sadruddin on his part, ensured that all those persons displaced from East Africa were able to move to transit camps where they could wait for governments across the world to open a door for them. I was one of those to whom the Imam and his uncle gave hope and a new life. In Aga Khan's own words uttered in another context he 'ignited the spirit of human enterprise and determination' in me and my family. He inspired us not only to survive, but beyond that, to excel.

What I have learned as a Diasporan

Despite the Aga Khan's followers being expelled from Uganda, the institutions he established in Uganda continued to operate. In 1988 Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni agreed to hand the properties of the Imamat back to Aga Khan IV. When he met President Museveni, Aga Khan IV was touched by the Ugandan President's acknowledgement that these assets of the Imamat had been unlawfully expropriated. In a gesture of supreme magnanimity, Aga Khan IV assured the President that he would use the Imamat properties once again in the service of the country. According to Moham-

med Keshavjee, one of the members on the delegation which accompanied Aga Khan IV when he went to see President Museveni some 36 years ago, "in accepting the restitution to the Imamat of the jamatkhana building in Kampala (where his installation as Imam had taken place), Aga Khan IV ensured that the people squatting in the building were given reasonable alternative facilities." Today, Uganda is the sixth country where the Aga Khan University has a faculty, and every year hundreds of local citizens, mainly Black Africans, qualify in fields that are relevant to their countries' needs.

A visionary par excellence, Aga Khan IV, who succeeded to the Imamat before my birth, inspired me to serve humanity. About him I can only say, "vision without action is a dream. Action without vision is just passing time. Vision with action changes the world." Aga Khan IV was committed to changing the world, and he kept working for the betterment of this world right until the end of his life. His funeral reflected what he stood for- simplicity and elegance coupled with service before self.



On This Day – 8 September 1958
Gwadar became part of Pakistan — thanks to the Late Prince Karim Aga Khan IV!

For over 200 years, Gwadar was under the Sultanate of Oman.

In the 1950s, Pakistan wanted the port but had no funds. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV stepped in and arranged $3 million to buy it from Oman.

On this day in 1958, Gwadar was officially handed over to Pakistan — a selfless gift from the Imam, never asking for repayment.

Today, Gwadar stands as a strategic deep-sea port and a gateway to Pakistan's future.

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme

How the Lighting of a Candle on the Roof of the World (Bam-i-Dunya) Changed my Career Path

Shabnam S. Lutafali, PhD (Notre Dame) specialist in Women in Development and online faculty at Grand Canyon University, Arizona

Genesis

In the changing world of the mid-1950s, upon his accession as Aga Khan IV in 1957 the young Harvard-educated Imam of the Ismaili Muslims with a diverse global community took a year out from his studies to visit his various communities and to reflect upon what was needed to improve the quality of their lives and the lives of those among whom they lived. In the case of the Northern Areas of Pakistan, the terrain was inaccessible and the community there still lay outside the culture of national development. However, the Jubilees of Aga Khan III had given rise to schools for girls and medical centres for their basic health. It remained for Aga Khan IV to bring these communities into modern times. In this process Aga Khan IV had to embrace the culture of the area and work within the existing governmental and social developmental frameworks, as well as instituting new programmes that would meet the evolving needs of these isolated communities.

With the establishment of the Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva, in 1967, Aga Khan IV and a group of hand-picked global development specialists made a survey of social development programmes in South Asia and alighted upon a young Pakistani civil servant originally from Moradabad (India) who was on deputation from the government of Pakistan working with UNICEF in Sri Lanka. He had done some in Sri Lanka.

> ***"He had done some creative work under his mentor, Akhtar Hameed Khan (1914-1999), a world-renowned visionary in this area of development."***

This young man, Shoaib Sultan Khan (born 1933) had completed some projects under the aegis of UNICEF and was brought to the notice of Aga Khan IV, who had decided to set up a rural development programme in part of the Bam -i- Dunya (Roof of the World), i.e. the Northern Areas of Pakistan. This programme was going to be transformative to the extent that it would be responsive to the needs of the people as they themselves visualized those needs. It would be flexible, adaptive, accountable and people-centred, and would give agency to the people for their own transformation. This was the ideal opportunity for Shoaib Sultan Khan to whom Aga Khan IV gave full operating freedom within the ethical principles of Islamic social governance that included accountability, inclusivity, a consultative process and gender equity. According to Masood-Ul-Mulk, Vice Chair of the Rural Support Network (RSPN) which is a collection

of RSPs in Pakistan modelled on the AKRSP, the model that evolved blended beautifully with the environment and could be adapted to different environments in other parts of the world. For Masood "It gave agency to the people themselves, tapped their potential for self- help and collective action through instilling in them the notion of good governance at the very grass roots level of co-existence. It did this through encouraging them to jointly identify a common project which they chose themselves and which they also agreed to implement themselves. Consequently, they took full ownership of it".

Early in his tenure with AKRSP, Shoaib Sultan Khan authored a book titled The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme: A Journey Through Grassroots Development, published by Oxford University Press. The book describes participatory development at a very practical level of operation involving people themselves in the decision-making process for the improvement of their lives.

> ***"I came across Shoaib Sultan Khan's book and was so inspired by it, that I decided to change my thesis to 'Development Strategies for Rural Women of Pakistan'."***

While a doctoral student at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, I came across Shoaib Sultan Khan's book and was so inspired by it, that I decided to change my thesis to 'Development Strategies for Rural Women of Pakistan'. Shoaib Sultan Khan's book was an inspiration and valuable source of information for my work. His commitment to gender equality inspired by Aga Khan IV's ardent desire to promote women on an equal footing with men was decisive in changing the trajectory of my doctoral thesis.

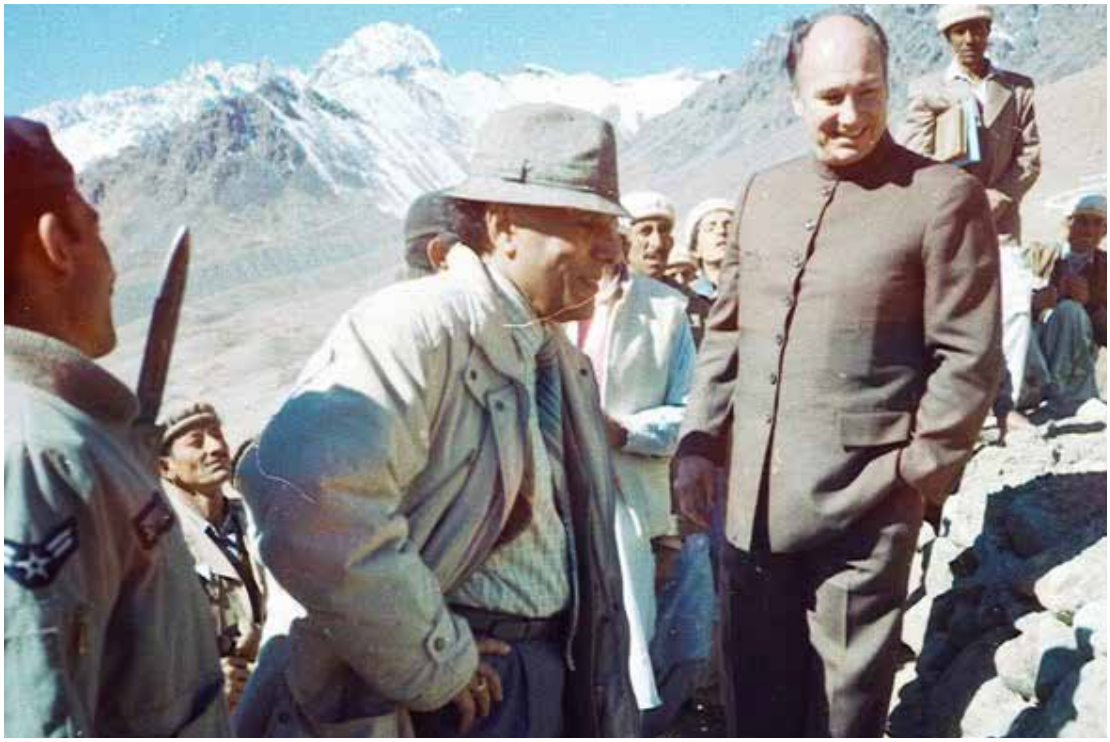
AKRSP works in the fields of community mobilization, community infrastructure development. human resource development, enterprise development, social forestry and agriculture and livestock development. However, its major achievement is that it mobilized communities and provided a platform on which other AKDN institutions could work to improve education, health, social welfare, and economic opportunities, which they successfully did, serving all the people of the area regardless of class, gender or creed.

AKRSP thus is an institution that was decades ahead of its time in foreseeing the problems encountered by the world today. These include the problems of mass migration due to environmental degradation, and lack of opportunities in undeveloped and underdeveloped regions of the globe, as well as climate change induced by the exponential growth in the use of fossil fuels, to name but a few. In the Northern Areas of Pakistan, AKRSP has successfully enacted programmes that provide incentives for the local people (Ismailis and other communities) to exist peacefully with a rising standard of living, better schooling for children with opportunities for higher education, better health care facilities with world class maternity homes, and access to financial institutions to manage and grow wealth. AKRSP's agrarian programmes enhance food production. Cottage industries are also promoted to generate income for families. Such incentives bind people to their native lands and deter them from migrating. The World Bank has reported AKRSP's success in various fields of human endeavour including education, health, and wealth growth and management. AKRSP has successfully addressed the human issues that other institutions can emulate. As a model, AKRSP became globally respected and its principles were replicated in places such as Madhya Pradesh in India and in the high mountain valleys of Central Asia, most particularly in Tajikistan. Furthermore, AKRSP became the paradigm for other rural development programmes in Pakistan which Shoaib Sultan Khan went on to champion.

One of the most notable outcomes of the AKRSP is that young women from the Hunza district of Pakistan have begun to access further education opportunities through the Aga Khan University and other institutions of higher learning. Some of these young women

now work in leading institutions in Pakistan, the Gulf area and in the Western World.

On a personal level, the journey I embarked on proved very valuable as I, myself, have been invited to lecture in Canada and in Japan on the whole notion of relevant rural support mechanisms field I continue to cherish today in the USA and in which I am deeply involved.



AKRSP - Northern Areas, Pakistan, A Journey through Grossroots Development

The Ismaili Centre:
A Crossroads of Cultural Encounters

By **Amin Abdulla-Pardhan**, distinguished gallerist known for his specialisation in arts and music events, respected for his profficiency in curating exceptional exhibitions and offering tailored framing solutions.

One of six global Ismaili Centres, inspired by Aga Khan IV, the Ismaili Centre, London, nestled in the heart of South Kensington, was opened in April 1985 in the presence of the then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Located amidst the rich architectural heritage of London's Art and Cultural centre, it harmonizes beautifully with the local building styles of the Natural History Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Ismaili Centres are not only a place of prayer for the Ismaili congregation but also a serene space for contemplation, arts, music, and cultural exchanges. They foster thoughtprovoking meetings and discussions on health, education, and development, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere for all who visit them.

The architectural design of the Ismaili Centre, London, is a blend of traditional Islamic and modern elements, reflecting the cultural heritage and contemporary outlook of the Ismaili community. The Centre features a stunning roof garden that offers a peaceful retreat in the bustling city, and its interior is adorned with exquisite calligraphy and intricate geometric patterns that pay homage to Islamic art and architecture.

The Ismaili Centre has become a vibrant hub for cultural and artistic activities, hosting a wide range of events, exhibitions, and performances that celebrate the diversity and richness of global cultures. It has established itself as a significant landmark in London, promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding through its various initiatives and programs.

In addition to its cultural and artistic contributions, the Ismaili Centre also serves as a place for community service and outreach. It partners with local organizations and institutions to address social issues and support initiatives that promote the wellbeing and development of the broader community. The Centre's engagement with the Nour Festival of Arts by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea {RBKC) in 2014 marked a bold and vibrant celebration of the artistic and cultural heritage of the Middle East and North Africa {MENA). This Festival became a beacon of creativity and connection, a place where the rich tapestries of the MENA regions artistry came to life, igniting the imaginations and hearts of all who attended.

My journey with the Festival began when the Ismaili Centre Council invited me to join the festival's steering committee. This opportunity was not just a role; it was a calling. It allowed the Ismaili Centre to become a pulsating heart within South Kensington's arts and cultural hub. The Centre flourished as a venue for vibrant music events, thought-provoking exhibitions, and enlightening lectures, each event echoing the diverse heritage and profound stories of the MENA region.

The Festival's mission was clear: to weave a tapestry of artistic expression that resonated deeply with everyone involved. Collaborations, like the one with the Royal Geographical Society, were more than partnerships; they were symphonies of culture and history. The exhibition focused on the garments worn along the Silk Road, an evocative journey from East to West. A senior representative from the Society, Mr Alasdair Macleod, delivered a lecture that was not just informative but a heartfelt odyssey through the origins and influences of the Silk Road in the arts. The garments on display, hailing from Iran, Syria, Morocco and Egypt, whispered tales of ancient travels and cultural exchanges from the past to modernity.

The Music@One series at the Ismaili Centre, a radiant jewel of the Festival, brought people together through the universal language of music. These free lunchtime mini concerts were more than performances; they were soul-stirring experiences.

Musicians from the Middle East and North Africa, along with talent from around the globe, graced the Ismaili Centre with their enchanting melodies. The series continued to flourish, becoming a beloved feature that resonated with the community throughout the year.

One of the most magical moments was when in 2015 Australian Egyptian Oud soloist Joseph Tawadros performed at the Ismaili Centre. His music, rich with emotion and tradition, captivated everyone.

Having been invited by the Nour Festival team to perform at the Ismaili Centre, Joseph recalls:

"I had never heard of this place before but was very excited as I heard good things about it. My correspondence with the team was very professional and respectful which made me feel quite at home, which is what a performer wants. The space was lovely and inspiring, and the audience was very enthusiastic and loving which allowed me to present my music and storytelling with ease. I wasn't sure what to expect, having just arrived a few months earlier to reside in London. This was my first big performance after moving to London and to an entirely different audience to what I was used to. The architecture and beauty of the building makes it a very inspiring place to perform, and I have many great memories performing at the Ismaili Centre. My storytelling and humour which usually accompanies my music was very well received and the concert was a great success. Years later I was invited by Amin for another solo performance in a different space, this time by the fountain. It was another success and great to be a part of such a wonderful series in a beautiful space for a beautiful audience."

It was during one of Joseph's spellbinding performances that Scottish Egyptian sisters Sarah and Laura Ayoub connected with the Centre. Their performances, filled with passion and artistry, became a cherished part of the festival. The collaboration with the Royal Geographical Society during the reimagined RBKC Summer Exhibition Road Arts Festival was a testament to the enduring spirit of creativity and cultural exchange..

Sarah and Laura Ayoub also cherish their experiences at the Ismaili Centre. They said:

"The Ismalli Centre first welcomed us to the community back in 2017. We were given a platform to showcase our music and our brand-new quartet for the very first time in London as part of the Diamond Jubilee Music Series, set up to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Aga Khan IV. Our debut performance consisted of a sold-out matinee and evening show, which enabled us to reach diverse audiences within London. Since that performance our quartet has graced festivals across the UK including Glastonbury, Liverpool Arab Arts Festival and concerts in Latvia and Egypt. One thing we will never forget about the Ismaili Centre concert was the warmth and hospitality we felt. We weren't just contracted performers; we were treated like one of the family. Music and food were the universal languages which brought us together, no-matter our background or ethnicity. Those concerts were very special to us and will be held in our hearts for a long time."

The Nour Festival of Arts was not just an event; it was a journey of the heart, a celebration of the human spirit, and a testament to the power of art and music to bridge worlds and bring people together in the most profound ways. Through these artistic collaborations and heartwarming performances, the Ismaili Centre has successfully showcased the beauty of Islamic culture and its contributions to the broader community, building bridges of understanding and appreciation.

> ***"The collaboration with the Royal Geographical Society during the reimagined RBKC Summer Exhibition Road Arts Festival was a testament to the enduring spirit of creativity and cultural exchange."***

Besides London, the other Ismajli Centres are situated in Lisbon, Dubai, Toronto, Dushanbe, and Vancouver. With others under planning and construction, each centre reflects a unique blend of Islamic and local architectural elements, serving as a cultural bridge between Muslim civilizations and their host cities.

In the words of the late Aga Khan, whose vision for the Ismajli Centres extended beyond mere architectural beauty, and was about fostering mutual respect and understanding:

"This [Ismajli Centre, Burnaby] will be a place of congregation, of order, of peace, of prayer, of hope, of humility, and of brotherhood, From it should come forth those thoughts, those sentiments, those attitudes, which bind men together and which unite. It has been conceived and will exist in a mood of friendship, courtesy, and harmony."

Aga Khan IV's vision, as just stated, became a reality for me and members of the community as we saw the Ismaili Centre, London, grow to match and fulfil the aims set out for it by its founder who believed in pluralism, openness and a dialogue of cultures.

How The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Helped Me to Gain a Better Understanding of Islam and its Multifacetted Humanistic Dimensions

By **Don Mowatt**, retired Canadian broadcaster and award-winning writer whose radio programmes, stage plays and stories have been seen and heard across North America and Europe

The passing away of His Highness Prince Karim alHussaini, Aga Khan IV, Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, in Lisbon on 4 February 2025 brings to the surface two decades of memories associated with his accomplishments and my first hand observations of them, particularly in the realm of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA).

In the spring of 1991, I was asked to meet a small group of Ismailis for lunch in Vancouver, BC, to discuss the possibilities of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) making a series of broadcasts on Islamic Architecture. At that time, I was a radio producer for the CBC in Vancouver and a major contributor to the acclaimed national series, called IDEAS, broadcast nightly across Canada.

As the discussion developed, it became clear to us all that the most workable possibility for such a series should focus on the buildings and sites connected to the Award which would serve as a representative reflection on the faith in action. Once the submission had been made to the IDEAS board in Toronto, my education in the history of Islam in general and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) in particular, began in earnest.

At some point, the idea of my attending the next Award prize giving ceremony in Samarkand, Uzbekistan arose along with the possibility of my interviewing Aga Khan IV himself, who at that time had only given one interview to a Canadian broadcaster.

"Architecture is the only art form," postulated Aga Khan IV, "with direct impact on the quality of life ... And, in Islamic architecture, there is a spirituality that considers the impact on the welfare of the community and the natural environment."

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established in 1977 to enhance the understanding and appreciation of Islamic culture as expressed in architecture. The prizes given by it are intended to identify and recognize projects that incorporate contemporary design, social housing, community improvement, restoration and area conservation as well as landscape and environmental issues. The object is to discover and encourage building concepts that most

successfully address the needs and aspirations of societies in which Muslims have a significant presence, with a particular emphasis on building projects that employ local resources and materials in an innovative way.

Members of the local Ismaili community leadership were most diligent in providing me with references to relevant materials, access to prominent architects, historians and theological experts for this assignment, culminating in a full-length interview in Toronto with Aga Khan IV and in the months following, I received an invitation to attend the 1992 AKAA ceremony in Samarkand, and was commissioned with the eventual production of six hourlength radio programmes.

Samarkand in Central Asia, once a fabled city lying on the ancient Silk Route from China to Western Europe was founded around 700 BCE and occupied by an endless series of conquerors including Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. It has been a UNESCO world heritage site since the beginning of the 21st century. It is the perfect meeting place for some of the world's leading architects to attend the honouring of their colleagues with the most valuable and prestigious set of architectural awards. These awards, unlike most others in the field, are also given to people besides the actual architects people who were involved in essential roles in the projects: builders, clients, artisans, engineers and municipalities. And the jury members include internationally recognized architectural experts, not just those from the Islamic faith or countries.

As guests of Aga Khan IV we were given tours of many of the historic buildings and complexes by experienced local guides..in-..Samarkand. as..well...as..in..the...famed; Uzbek síster aties of Bukhara and Khiva. In addition to-these-tours.and.the. elaborate Awards Ceremony and Reception, we were participants in a series of lectures and presentations by the current winning architects.

> ***"As guests of Aga Khan IV we were given tours of many of the historic buildings and complexes by experienced local guides in Samarkand as well as in the famed Uzbek sister cities of Bukhara and Khiva."***

All of these events were presided over by Aga Khan IV and members of the Master Jury, a totally independent board, who, as in previous years reviewed the hundreds of submissions for this prestigious award. Aga Khan IV introduced them and guided us through the presentations with a sensitivity and extensive knowledge of, as well as a passion for, building projects that substantially enrich the lives of the communities involved by addressing some of the critical issues of life that architecture is meant to address.

I was particularly moved by one example among many that were recognized in this Award sequence - the reconstruction of the Kampung Kali Cho-de in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which I was to visit three years

later in 1995 at a subsequent AKAA prize giving ceremony.

This location in the centre of Yogyakarta in the Island of Java had been a squatter settlement in a ravine refuse dump for decades, offering a home to the homeless, albeit in appalling conditions. The initiative to change all this came from a local parish priest who had approached the regional government with a proposal. The architect and builders came up with a series of dwellings in a community complex, all constructed from a combination of timber and bamboo, an urban version of a traditional tribal house. The structures were illustrated by flag-like paintings on the outside walls with familiar plant, animal and monster motifs chosen by the inhabitants themselves - mostly the original squatters and their families. On my tour there in 1995 in the company of the chief architect, we visited the home of one of the inhabitants, a former squatter now in her forties with her family. She described how life had been and how things now were, so radically safer and more secure. She was happy, gracious and eager to tell us of the success of the natural air conditioning in a notoriously hot muggy climate. This had been achieved not by electricity as in the West, but by the careful construction of rooms so that the air could flow: freely and achieve the desired cooling effect. Now, everywhere here, above the sounds of the traffic, were the voices of children playing happily.

In Samarkand, though we were surrounded in the Registan Square by a quadrangle of magnificent monumental madrasas, minarets, columns and portals, this presentation of a simple ravine complex of bamboo and timber dwellings in Yogyakarta, received equal international attention and recognition from the Master Jury of the AKAA. So too, three years later, when the AKAA was being held in Yogyakarta, another folk-inspired architectural innovation, this time in Mauretania, received an award that caught all our attention.

In many parts of the world, technology has progressed more rapidly than can easily be processed or assimilated, particularly by rural populations. In too many cases, in Third World countries, as we call them, Western values have been imposed indiscriminately. In the architecture of facilities meant for common use, materials foreign to rural communities have been used: concrete, steel and glass, as well as shapes and concepts alien to their surroundings. These are just two examples of how the AKAA has encouraged the use of local resources that are relevant to the cultures and needs of different peoples.

Amid all these wonderful building sites, both ancient and modern, to which I was witness in my years of association with the AKAA as a radio broadcaster, one incident stood out for me. While I was wandering through the grounds of an immense madrasa in Bukhara, with my microphone in 1992, accompanied by a group of architects connected to the AKAA, I heard a student in a room of the madrasa chanting verses from the Quran in a strong clear expressive voice. I moved closer to catch the sound on my recording equipment. A young boy, who must have been no older than nine or ten, saw me and by hand signals indicated that I should go into the building to be closer to the source of the chanting. I attempted to decline his suggestion, thinking it would be an inappropriate intrusion for a non-Muslim, but he persisted. He went inside the classroom, the chanting stopped. I could faintly hear a conversation going on, then the boy came back outside and led me inside.by.the band and the student.resumed.his.... chanting while I

recorded it all. The boys both refused any payment. In an ancient place of learning, lessons were still being taught.

Years ago, Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi of Malaysia remarked: "Building bridges of understanding. between. Islam, and the non-Islamic.... world is the vision of His Highness, the Aga Khan [IV]. His dedication to architecture for four decades is just one shining example of his commitment to promoting goodwill between people and cultures" In association with the AKAA, I was able to prepare and air six one-hour radio programmes for CBC IDEAS between 1991 and 2003 which the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the umbrella organisation under which the AKAA operates today, made available to schools in many countries across the world. A true bridge-builder, Aga Khan IV facilitated this knowledge transfer.

Aga Khan IV makes a point in a meeting with Don Mowatt in Canada.

BBC World

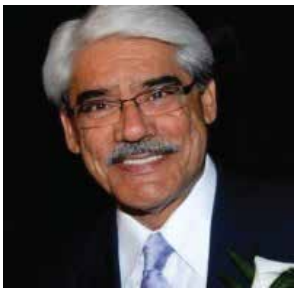
Thousands of institutes under his name in the name of humanity and charity, he never stood back to become a shelter for homeless, providing Education globally.

A man does not die when his body stops breathing, he dies when his light fades from the world. But some lights never fade. Aga Khan was not just a man; he was a flowing river, a presence, a movement. He did not seek power; he sought to awaken hearts. His hands built schools, hospitals, bridges, not just of stone, but of understanding, dignity, and self-reliance. His vision was not for a day, a year, or a lifetime, it was for generations.

Solo, Central Java, Indonesia - AKDN

Winners of the 2025 Aga Khan Award for Architecture announced (Ceremony held in Bishkek, Krygyztan in September 2025)

Tribute to Aga Khan IV



Dr. Alnoor Abdullah
M.D. FRCPC, FACC, FFACP, FACC. Vancouver, Canada

On Feb 4, 2025 the world heard the sad news of the peaceful passing of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, the Spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community, in Lisbon, Portugal, surrounded by his family.

His heritage stems from Prophet Muhammed whose daughter Fatima was married to Hazarat Ali, who was appointed as the 1st Imam of the Shia Muslims after the death of The Prophet.(Nass). Shah Karim al Hussaini, in that hereditary tradition (Nass) was the 49th Imam of the Nizari, Shia Ismaili Muslims. In that role he was not only the Spiritual Leader of his community but also had the responsibility to care for their secular well-being and quality of life.

It is in that secular role that the World got to know him as he went about transforming his community over the almost 68 years of Imamat (11th July 1957 – 4th Feb 2025). When he inherited the role of Imam from his Grandfather Shah Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III, the community was spread across more than 25 countries, almost all of them in the underdeveloped and developing world.

Over the next 6 decades he brought the community out of poverty, improved their Education and Health status, set up strong, sustainable Institutions to support them, guided the migration of few millions to the West, where the community has flourished professionally, economically and becoming strong civic minded contributing citizens and leaders in the countries they have settled.

His undeniable global legacy is that, along that journey he improved the lives of millions around the world, amongst whom his followers lived, without any restriction to their religion, race, gender, political affiliation or any other societal divisions. His tireless humanitarian work in poverty alleviation and significantly improving the quality of life of the people in need, in areas of Asia and Africa has been unapparelled and highly admired and recognized. He brought professionalism, meritocracy and pride within his institutions and gave dignity and hope to millions who were fortunate to be touched by his compassion and caring.

He was the originator of the concept of not only accepting diversity, but highlighting how that diversity was a positive asset and not a reason to sow division among humanity borne from a single Universal Soul. From his International pulpit, he guided his community and the world towards the principles of pluralistic, peaceful coexistence within societies and countries.

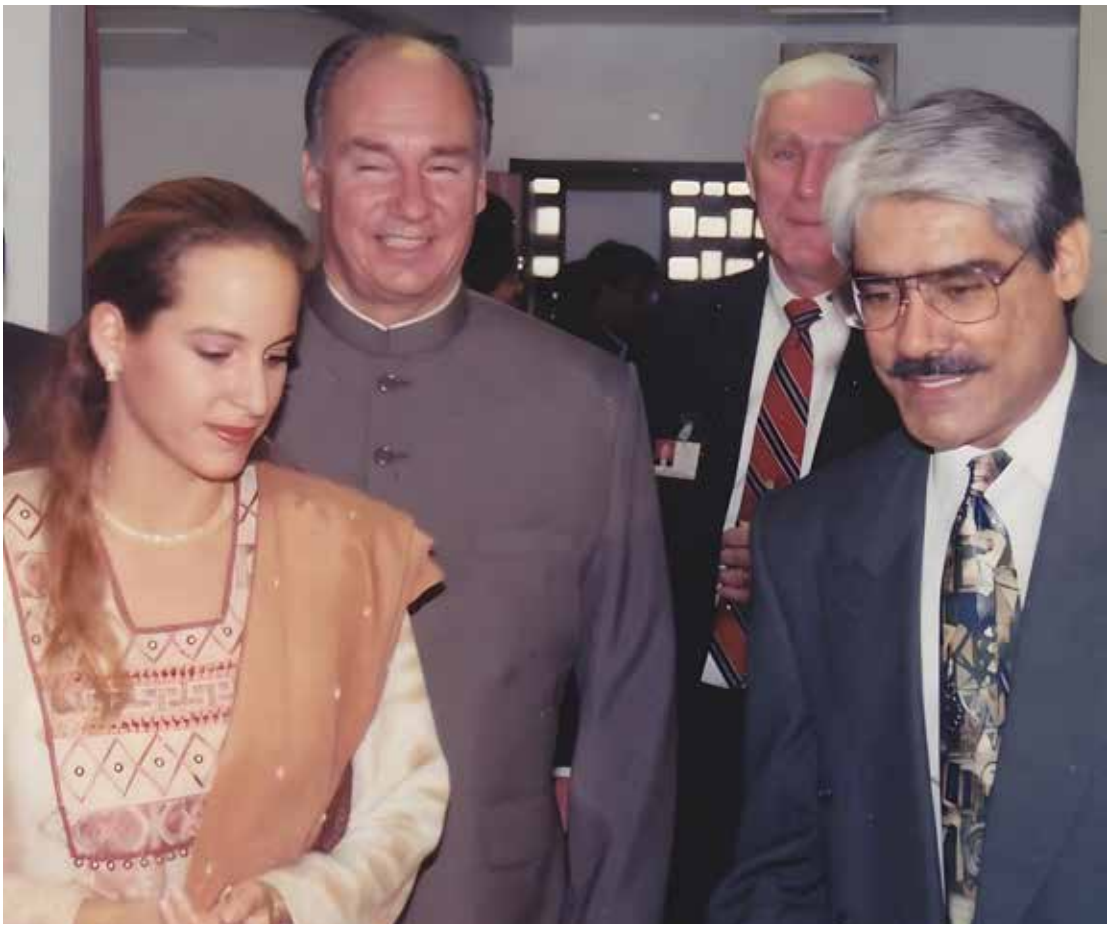
The other legacy he lives behind, which is still a work in progress, is showing the true face of Islam to the West and getting the West to understand the Islamic faith, the contributions to the world that the Islamic civilizations made in areas of culture, architecture, science, algebra, astronomy, medicine, governance and multiple other areas. He was a product of both the East and the West and was a bridge between them and brought mutual respect to both worlds. The awards, titles, degrees, and many other accolades he has received come from all areas of the world and all cultures. It is said by one Canadian leader that when The Aga Khan spoke the World listened.

He was a universally accepted World Leader with no geographical, cultural, racial or religious boundaries. He will forever live in the hearts of millions around the world; whose religious leader he was NOT and who did not even know of him in 1957. Over the 68 years he transformed his small minority Shia Muslim commu-

nity of 15 million living mainly in Asia and Africa to a vibrant, upwardly mobile, better educated and with improved health and economic facilities. Many members in his community became very highly educated, holding leadership roles in essentially all walks of life, not only in the developing world but also, very much so, in the West. Along the way with his compassion and sustainable programs for all those in need, he won their respect, hearts and minds. The recognition and admiration he got on the world stage for his efforts to bring peace, improved understanding of Islam, being the bridge between the East and the West, has been universal.

His Imamat, his Aga Khan title, his legacy and work will continue uninterrupted – which is now all being passed on to his successor, his eldest son Prince Rahim Aga Khan. To the community he is now the 50th hereditary Imam - Mowlana Hazar Imam Shah Rahim al Hussaini.

As an individual member of the Shia Ismaili community, I grew up in a rural town in central Tanzania, where we had rudimentary running water taps, no electricity till I was 8 years old to now living for 52 years in North America. My biggest satisfaction is not just my career, multiple post graduate degrees or positions I have held , etc. but that; in any setting what so ever, social, educational, institutional, political or with anybody of any social – economic group -- I am humbly proud (if there is anything like that?), to raise my head and to say where I come from and that I belong to the Shia Ismaili Muslim faith and that; The Aga Khan is our Leader.



H H Prince Karim Aga Khan, Princess Zehra and Dr Alnoor on the occasion of the opening ceremony of newly developed Cardiac Prog.

Tribute to H H Prince Karim Aga Khan IV

KumKum Dasgupta

Aga Khan IV, 49th imam of Ismaili Muslims, passed away on Tuesday, February 4, 2025. Despite being one of the world's wealthiest hereditary rulers, Khan, born Karim Al-Hussaini, didn't simply pursue wealth creation but blended it seamlessly with philanthropy.

A 2013 Vanity Fair piece captured his unique approach succinctly: "[He is] both philanthropist and venture capitalist. But the high level of synergy he maintains between his nonprofit and commercial activities is probably unique in the world. All of the surpluses from his profit-making companies are reinvested in his development work."

India has much to thank him for. Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) works extensively across diverse fields — from water and sanitation, maternal health and family nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and disaster risk reduction and response, to cultural restoration, and school improvement. Its overarching mission: improving quality of life.

Heritage conservation was close to the heart of this 2015 Padma Vibhushan recipient. He brought his unique perspective to it much before anyone thought on those lines. "He spoke about culture and heritage as an economic model 50 years ago and demonstrated to India and the world how culture and development can be two wheels of the same

AKTC 1.4 *lac saft Humayun Tomb Project - Dehli, India*

chariot," said Ratish Nanda, CEO, Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) India. "He saw culture as a vehicle for socio-economic development."

In July 2024, AKTC gave India a gift on its 75th year of Independence: a world-class, underground museum sprawling across 1.4 lakh sq ft at Humayun's Tomb. He couldn't be present because of his ill health, but his son Rahim came.

The museum was much more than that — it was the culmination of 25 years of conservation efforts across Delhi's 300-acre Humayun's Tomb–Sunder Nursery–Nizamuddin Basti area.

Over 60 monuments have been restored, and the Sunder Nursery city park has been developed as part of an integrated conservation and development initiative. 20,000 local people benefited from the project.

AKDN Nizamuddin Basti - Delhi, India: Renewal Project

What makes the Nizamuddin project unique is that it did not focus solely on restoring monuments, but also ensured that the local community is an active participant in the process. This holistic approach to heritage conservation — one that intertwines culture, ecology and community welfare — is a testament to Aga Khan's vision.

In Hyderabad, another history-rich city, AKTC has restored the Qutb Shahi Tombs Complex and Deccan Park. This site, one of the most significant medieval necropolises, comprises 70 structures, including 40 mausoleums, 23 mosques, five step-wells, a hammam (mortuary bath), pavilions, garden structures and enclosure walls. These were built during the reign of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, which ruled the region for 170 years in the 16th and 17th centuries.

AKDN Qutb Shahi Tombs Complex - Hyderabad, India

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"Who would invest so much money and effort in 100 acres of just landscape restoration? He taught us to dream big, and there was never a lack of patronage and leadership from his side," said Nanda.

Today, Humayun's Tomb complex is packed with visitors from all walks of life. The museum alone sees around 6,000 visitors a week, with nearly 60% of them exploring all three sites, spending an average of 4–5 hours, a proof of Aga Khan's vision of people-centric development. "Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, another AKDN project, attracts more visitors than the pyramids," Nanda noted.

Aga Khan firmly believed that cultural preservation was not solely the government's responsibility. Instead, he championed partnerships with the state. Both the Humayun's Tomb complex and Qutb Shahi Tombs serve as model conservation projects and case studies in sustainable heritage restoration.

"At the end of the day, he was looking for human profits," a close friend and former World Bank president James Wolfensohn had rightly said.

Housing Centre, Mumbai India

Housing Centre, Mumbai India

Speech of H. H. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV at Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park, Cairo, Egypt.

Our experience in creating Al-Azhar Park has taught us important new lessons that will contribute to the international body of knowledge about preservation and development in world heritage cities, a substantial portion of them in the Muslim world. This is because what we started as one project actually turned into three.

1. The design and construction of a park,
2. The restoration of the Ayyubid wall and
3. The community redevelopment of the historically important Darabal Ahmar neighborhood.

Many projects continue and there are no doubt many surprises to come and many lessons to be learned. I look forward to that because this process has been particularly satisfying for me from a very personal perspective.

In our excavations and historical investigations, I constantly have been reminded that we were touching the very foundations of my ancestors, the Fatimids, and the pluralistic history and intellectual profile of this city and this country to which they contributed so profoundly.

35 generations later, through the work done here by my institutions, it is my prayer that this park will be a continuing contribution to the people of this great city.

How Aga Khan led a quiet revolution

Dr. Mohammed Keshavjee,
Post doctoral research scholar, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London:

The late Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, who passed away in Lisbon last month, succeeded his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan iii, as the spiritual leader of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims in July 1957, when massive changes were taking place globally.

Having taken a year off from his studies at Harvard University, the Aga Khan IV decided to travel all over the world to gain a first-hand understanding of his followers' needs and what would be required to ensure quality of life for them and the people among whom they lived, regardless of race, faith, gender or ethnicity.

On a visit to Hunza, on the border of Afghanistan and the People's Republic of China, he undertook part of the journey on a donkey.

While trying to visualise programmes for the betterment of his followers he also reflected on the wide range of interventions needed to mitigate conflict and also improve the quality of life for people.

In east Africa, the Aga Khan IV upgraded education, health and economic development institutions pioneered by his grandfather under the old colonial system and provided them a meaningful role in nation-building activities as the countries in the region prepared for political independence.

Here, he understood the plight of the indigenous African people and while guiding his own community to prepare for the new reality of independence, he also founded the first African owned newspaper, the Nation Group, that would go on to lay the foundation of a responsible press in east Africa.

This eventually went on to spawn the Graduate School of Media and Communications of the Aga Khan University which he established; today it has faculties in six countries, spanning east Africa, south Asia and the UK.

The Aga Khan IV was involved in a range of activities globally, which included education, healthcare, low cost housing, micro finance, cultural regeneration programmes, energy development, rural support programmes, architecture, industrial development and eco-tourism.

He set up one of the most prestigious prizes in the world, The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, which recognised excellence in the sector, while engaging people from different disciplines. That award led to the setting up of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, which today is responsible for a number of restoration projects in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Spain as well as Canada.

In the field of rural development, he founded the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in northern Pakistan with Shoaib Sultan Khan, a protégé of the world renowned expert, Akhtar Hamid Khan. It became a model of a people-centric process which today is emulated in many parts of the world including the high mountain valleys of central Asia.

The Aga Khan IV's greatest strength was his ability to listen to the needs of the people at the grassroots level and his readiness to consult. He believed that people were the best agents of their own transformation and was able to tap the talent of some of the best brains in the world.

A man of great humility, he shied away from praise. When asked by a leading Canadian TV journalists, (the late) Roy Bonisteel, how he would be liked to be remembered one day, the Aga Khan's answer was a very categorical "not by name or by face". If his programmes to help the people they were meant to serve actually reached them, then his mission in life would have been fulfilled, was his response.

Facilities | Study | The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV - A visionary Leader

by **Dr. Asma Ibrahim**
Post Doctoral Fellow, University of Wisconsin, USA

Remembering a Visionary, I could never imagine it would be so difficult to write about one of my favorite personalities, who have played a great role in my life. I believe whoever I am today, wherever I am today is because of this visionary personality.

He has so many versatile qualities and service for humanity that it seems one can write several books, each covering one aspect of his contribution to the world amongst several.

He was kind to all whether his community or not, I think he never bothered about it at least in my case. I requested to study medical at AKU, to pursue my studies in the subject of Archaeological Chemistry, which was a new one for Pakistan. He understood the importance immediately and I was allowed to study medical as one of the students of the college. This was like a dream come true, I could pursue my studies first one of its kind in Pakistan.

The other memorable contribution by His Highness was the full support for the study and analysis of the Persian Mummy, which was a world famous scandal.

His teams were on it continuously in every aspect of analysis from x-ray, CT scan, microbial analysis, etc. which helped me a lot in studying the Mummy and coming to the conclusion that everything around Mummy was fake.

His influence on global education is also profound and multifaceted, marked by his visionary leadership, institution-building, and an ethical philosophy rooted in service to humanity. He viewed education beyond mere economic advancement, emphasizing it as a means for self-making in service of the world and societal betterment.

His Highness profoundly shaped cultural preservation, Islamic architecture, and intercultural understanding, leaving a legacy that blends spiritual leadership with global development and philanthropy across multiple continents.

He established the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1977 to honor projects that combine excellence in architectural design with social impact, environmental awareness, and respect for Islamic traditions.

This initiative has played a pivotal role in rejuvenating historical landmarks across the Muslim world–from restoring UNESCO World Heritage sites in Cairo, Delhi, and Kabul to supporting innovative architecture that meets modern urban and environmental challenges.

His vision emphasized that architecture should serve human dignity, foster community development, and preserve cultural identity simultaneously. The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, opened in 2014, stands as a permanent home showcasing Islamic art and artifacts, promoting intercultural dialogue and great-

er appreciation of Islamic civilization beyond the Muslim world.

Through the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), he spearheaded efforts in education, healthcare, rural development, and economic empowerment that also respected cultural traditions. His programs foster empowered communities while promoting sustainable socio-economic advancement, demonstrating a model where faith and modernity coexist harmoniously.

Legacy in Pakistan and South Asia

His impact resonates deeply in his birth region and beyond. Institutions like Aga Khan University in Karachi have become centers of academic excellence, particularly in medicine and healthcare training, transforming many lives. The AKDN's rural support programs in Pakistan and India have developed infrastructure, education, and social services while respecting local culture.

These efforts illustrate his holistic approach to cultural and community development deeply rooted in Islamic ethics and pluralism.

In sum, Aga Khan IV's legacy in culture is that of a visionary leader who harmonized Islamic tradition with contemporary challenges, building bridges across societies, and enhancing global appreciation of the rich heritage of Islam through preservation, education, and dialogue. His life's work remains a testament to the power of culture as a catalyst for peace, development, and mutual understanding.

Picture showing AKU Staff with Dr Asma Ebrahim analysing fake mummy.

Tribute to Aga Khan IV

by **Anwar Rammal**,
Chairman Asiatic Public Relations, Board Member, Patients' Behbud Society for AKU and Board Membe, National Academy of Performing Arts.

In the heart of Karachi, amidst the bustling city's centre, lies a serene campus of pink buildings – the Aga Khan University and Hospital (AKUH). This architectural marvel, with its intricate designs, ponds and greenery, is a testament to the vision and humanity of the beloved 49th Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, who recently passed away, leaving behind a profound global legacy.

His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV was not only a spiritual leader. He was a visionary who believed in the fusion of faith with worldly matters. He emphasised that faith should deepen our concern for our worldly habitat, embracing its challenges and improving the quality of human life. This responsibility as an Imam led him to establish the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), an endeavour committed to improving the quality of life for people around the world.

AKUH, part of the AKDN, is a shining example of His Highness' commitment to excellence and his vision for a better future. AKUH has not only provided world-class medical education and healthcare in Pakistan; it has also become a source of knowledge and talent for the developing world. Its graduates and faculty have gone on to serve in various capacities, contributing to the development of healthcare systems globally.

As a Shia Ismaili Muslim follower who had the privilege of working closely with His Highness and the AKDN, I witnessed firsthand his visionary leadership, meticulous attention to detail and unwavering commitment to excellence. His Highness had an extraordinary ability to plan for the long-term future while remaining deeply involved in the execution of projects, ensuring that even the most minute details were not overlooked.

I recall an incident in the eighties when His Highness was visiting Pakistan. I was tasked with the responsibility of printing the stationery for the AKUH, a seemingly simple assignment that turned into a valuable lesson in quality and leadership. The brand manual, designed by John Lees, specified a particular Pantone shade of red, which was unavailable in Pakistan. As the stationery needed to be printed urgently, the job was distributed among three printers who tried to match the Pantone shade. However, His Highness rejected the initial print due to variations in colour arising from the different printers – he did not want to compromise on the high standards expected from a world-class institution. Realising the challenge, I decided to have a special ink created in bulk to last a few years to match the exact Pantone shade, ensuring the same ink would be provided to any printer

for consistency across all printed materials. This experience taught me the importance of pursuing uncompromising quality and the leadership skills required to empower others to solve problems.

The ethos of self-reliance is deeply embedded in the multifaceted development approach of the AKDN. Another shining example, which I had the opportunity to work with in its early days, is the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), which has been instrumental in empowering rural communities in Pakistan and other countries. Through AKRSP, His Highness promoted the establishment of village organisations, enabling communities to identify their development priorities and implement projects with the support of AKDN.

AKRSP's work in areas such as natural resource management, education, health and rural finance has transformed the lives of millions, demonstrating the power of community-driven development. By fostering self-reliance and empowering communities to take charge of their own destinies, AKRSP exemplifies the vision of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, a vision that continues to inspire and uplift communities around the world.

His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan's visionary leadership, unwavering commitment to excellence and dedication to improving the quality of human life will forever be remembered and cherished. His legacy lives on through the chain of Imamat, now under the guidance of the 50th Ismaili Imam, Prince Rahim Aga Khan.

Summan's Geet, Hassan Ali G RAMMAL (Summan)

Geet - Baj Rahi Man Ki Beena Ki Tar...

Baj rahi man ki beena ki tar re pyar'e aqa Karim ke darbar
Aaj khushiyon ka hai yeh tahewar re pyare aqa Karim ke darbar
Baj....

Deepak se deepak jale jay'se jyoti, jalti rahe ta kayam
Sultan ke mukh se nikla Karim Shah gadi ka waras Imam
Jee bhar-ke khushiyan mana'o Ismaili'o, Zinda hai tera sardar re
- Pyar'e

Aal'e-Nabi aulaad-e-Ali hai, panjtan-ka paak noor
Chamk'e bijaliyan, teerchhi nayan mein jalve-ka hai koh-e-toor
Nazron-se nazrein mili jab-ke ek baar Kat'ti hai aafat hazaar
- Pyar'e

Bulbul-mein shor bol'e ban-ban mein mor
Meethi bhanwar-ki gunjaar
Patzarh mein aayee Ali ke dam se patte patte mein bahaar
Le kar ke hura'n falak pe khadi hein
Haatho'n mein phoolon ka haar
- Pyar'e

Saagar ki lehron mein gaagar sama do, utaaro jeevan ka bhaar
Aasha ki pyali le kar Karim Khan bhikshuk khada ter'e dwar
Pyari suratiyan yeh meethi muratiyan,
Pyari suratiyan yeh meethi muratiyan,
"Suman' kar'e jan nisaar re
- Pyar'e

Geet Translation

The strings of the flute of my heart are playing in the court of our dear Shah Karim. Today is the festival of happiness in the court of our dear Shah Karim.

From a lamp, a lamp is lit, a flame from a flame. May his light endure till the last day. From Sultan's mouth came the name of Karim Shah as the heir to the throne of Imamat.

Rejoice to your heart's content, O Ismailis, your sardar is alive.

He is the progeny of the Nabi, descendant of Ali, the sacred light of the Exalted Five. In his eyes, in a side-long glance, lightning is flashing; he is the Koh-e-noor of light. A single glance creates a thousand tempests.

There is an uproar among the nightingales; peacocks are calling in every grove; there is the sweet hum of the wasps. With Ali's steps has come the spring on every leaf, even in the autumn. Hurs are standing in the heavens with garlands of flowers in their hands.

Let the vessel merge with the waves of the sea; alleviate the burden of life. The beggar is standing at your door, O Karim Shah, with the bowl of hope. On his lovely countenance and sweet image, 'Suman' is consecrating his life.

HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE KARIM AGA KHAN IV
An Extraordinary Visionary, A Builder of Institutions

by **Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha**
Founding President of Aga Khan University, Karachi. Pakistan Chairman, Board of Trustees, University of Central Asia. Former Federal Minister for Education as well as Science and Technology, Pakistan

In its 1,400-year history the Muslim Ummah has been blessed with many visionary leaders, among them khalifs, scholars and explorers who founded new empires, discovered cures for deadly diseases and articulated ideas which changed the world.

In modern times however, few apolitical visionary leaders have devoted so much of their attention and resources to improving the quality of life of ordinary people, particularly in Muslim societies. Among them, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV stands out as a giant who passionately advocated the importance of inspiring hope, especially among those struggling to "find the first rung on the development ladder". While designating 20-year-old Prince Karim as his successor in 1957, his grandfather Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III had astutely observed the importance of appointing a leader to guide the Ismaili community in the recently dawned "atomic age". Upon assuming his new responsibilities, Prince Karim quickly recognized that the modern world required the institutionalization of many of his grandfather's social and economic initiatives. He also saw the multiplier effect on human development if this effort took a holistic approach, addressing simultaneously issues of education and health as well as economic and cultural advancement.

He brought his unique vision to life by establishing multiple development agencies, each designed to address specific development related issues and collectively known as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Through the impact of the combined efforts of these institutions, Prince Karim Aga Khan was instrumental in uplifting millions across Asia and Africa out of poverty during his own lifetime. From an array of his visionary development initiatives, let us look at just four examples.

Education and Health:

In his address to thousands of donors and volunteers in Karachi in 1994, Prince Karim explained why he established the Aga Khan University (AKU). To bring back the glory which once belonged to the Muslim Ummah, he observed, was not through accumulation of riches or military might but only through the power of development of its human resource—by educating its women and men. This conviction led him to build scores of schools, health centres and teaching hospitals in rural and urban locations in multiple countries. At their apex, AKU—founded in 1983 as Pakistan's first private university—now operates across Pakistan, Eastern Africa, the United Kingdom and Afghanistan, with high-quality academic and research programmes in numerous disciplines.

AKU's success and positive impact encouraged Prince Karim to establish in 2000, the University of Central Asia, through an international treaty with the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Together the programmes and campuses of these two not-for-profit, private, regional universities are now spread across a dozen countries graduating thousands annually and researching solutions to endemic issues which hold back development. Several individuals across the globe have the distinction of establishing one institution of higher education but founding two universities in one lifetime has few if any parallels.

Rural Development:

A second powerful strand of Prince Karim Aga Khan's vision was to improve the quality of life of rural populations. The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) established in 1967, brought this to reality through its innovative Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Northern Pakistan in 1982. AKRSP's community-driven model became a reference point for rural development in Pakistan and beyond. Today, AKF also operates innovative programmes in education, health, livelihoods and promotion of civil society in some two dozen countries resulting in a quantum change in the quality of life of millions. The Foundation's partnership with major international development agencies including the World Bank as well as private corporate and individual supporters bears testimony to the effectiveness of its programmes.

Economic Development:

Prince Karim's third focus was on improving economic conditions of Muslims and those among whom they lived. To attain this challenging objective, in 1984, he established the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) which went on to promote over 150 ventures in financial services, manufacturing, energy, tourism and communications across 15 countries. At the Enabling Environment Conference of 1968 in Kenya, Prince Karim spoke passionately about the importance of collaboration between government, business and voluntary sectors for sustained economic empowerment of marginalized populations, including women. AKFED's micro credit institutions supported small and medium sized enterprises in dozens of countries. Their success lead AKFED to enter commercial banking through the acquisition of HBL Bank, denationalized in 2004 by Pakistan. Today HBL stands out as the nation's largest bank, operating in a dozen countries, providing credit to millions of small and large borrowers and income for tens of thousands of shareholders.

Promotion of Culture:

Prince Karim was convinced that culture was a critical component of development. Without comprehending the wisdom, literature, art and music of its centuries old culture, modern Muslim societies could be bereft of their moorings. Thus, was established in 1988, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) and which became the home of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture founded in 1977 and recognised today as the premier architectural prize for buildings in the Muslim world and beyond. AKTC "expanded its scope from architecture to incorporate other programmes and projects to leverage culture for the socio-economic development of communities in the Muslim world." Its programmes serve to preserve dozens of heritage sites across Pakistan, India, Egypt, Malaysia, Mali and as far as Zanzibar, providing new opportunities for livelihoods to the neighbouring communities. AKTC's Aga Khan Music Programme and Music Awards recognize excellence in diverse genres ranging from religious recitations to classical as well as modern compositions and performances of music of Muslim societies.

Finally, the success of AKDN institutions owes much to several defining characteristics. Premier among these is the long-term view it takes of development, which often requires decades to show lasting results. An uncompromising objective of all AKDN institutions is to attain internationally recognized excellence in the quality of their programmes within the resources available. Another striking feature is the remarkable support all not-for-profit AKDN institutions receive from tens of thousands of volunteers from all walks of life who supplement the efforts of 90,000 employees. The volunteers bring AKDN programmes even closer to the communities they serve.

Perhaps the most enduring testament to the genius of Prince Karim Aga Khan IV lies in his institutionalization of development efforts through the AKDN agencies as the Ismaili Imamat transitioned seamlessly to Prince Rahim Aga Khan V in February 2025, continuing to bring hope for upliftment to millions.

INSTITUTIONS BUILD NATIONS

Bhupendra Patel
Chief Minister, Gujarat State

Dt. 21-03-2025

Snehi Shree Your Highness Shree Aga Khan V ji,
Saprem Namaskar.
I extend my heartfelt congratulations on Your Highness's successions as the **50th Imam** and **Spiritual Leader** of the **Shia Jsmaili Muslim Community**. Your ascension to his esteemed position marks a continuation of a legacy of wisdom, service and humanitarian leadership that has benefitted communities around the world.

We acknowledge with deep appreciation the remarkable contributions of your esteemed predecessor, **His Highness Aga Khan IV**, whose leadership guided the **Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)** in transforming lives through education, healthcare, economic development and cultural preservation. The AKDN's initiatives have played a vital role in advancing sustainable development and improving the well being of communities.

As Your Highness assumes this noble responsibility, we are confident that the Ismaili community and the global initiatives of the AKDN will continue to flourish under your leadership. On the momentous occasion, I convey my best wishes for Your Highness's health, strength and success in leading with wisdom and compassion. May Your tenure be marked by continued progress, unity and positive transformation with the highest esteem and warmest regards.

(Bhupendra Patel)

To,
Shree His Highness The Aga Khan V,
Diwan of Ismaili Imamat
Address Rua Marquês de Fronteira 18
1070-296 Lisboa Portugal

Tribute to His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV

by **Ms Rana Hussain**
Principal Ziauddin College of Education at
Ziauddin University

I served as Minister of Education in the Caretaker Government of Sindh 2022-23. In the course of my life, I have been blessed to serve the AKDN from the south of Pakistan to the Northern Areas of Pakistan for 3.5 decades beginning 1976. When Mr. Zulfiqar Meghani wrote to me that I should be writing an 800 words tribute to my guru, mentor and a holy figure HH Karim Aga Khan, I felt extremely humbled to be asked to write a tribute to His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan the IV Imam of the Ismaili Community. I thought this is what I had always wanted to write and here is an opportunity.

From my earliest days in Karachi as a school teacher, I can recall the afternoon of 31st March 1976 when I rushed to the school gate to enter as the announcements were made of HHs arrival to my school. The scouts stopped me, saying no you can't enter the gate is closed. I pleaded I am a teacher here please let me in , and one of the school head boy recognized me and I was let in.

I hurriedly rushed in the corridor to take over the charge of my classroom. This visit had been through a roller coaster ride since morning, messages were, he is coming, he is not coming sobbing and heartbroken we all left for homes. Lo! suddenly it was announced around 200 pm he is coming to school and I rushed back. Hence in a state of panic I started my session my class children of Grade 2 were all seated with clean and ironed uniform and I was teaching a science lesson on habitats the topic was about fish and we were making a real aquarium.

Suddenly there was an enthralling feeling in the environment I turned back (I was writing on the board) and guess what... the Charismatic leader was just in front of me, he shook hands and asked me to continue he sat in a chair and it is just I who can understand what I went through the shivers in my spine but I put up a bold face. After 2 minutes of my teaching HH stood up and came to my table saying, ' I enjoyed what you were teaching. I see a long association with you.' and then he joined all the dignitaries waiting at my class door to proceed further. This was the turning point in my career I had joined the school as a teacher in August 1975 and 7 months down the line I was privileged to be observed by a visionary muallim.

I saw how his leadership encouraged me and many others to think bigger, aim higher, and serve with humility. In Sindh, I saw the same spark ignite change in communities facing great challenges. At the University, I felt the breadth of his vision—global in outlook, yet deeply rooted in service to humanity.

Years later, at the opening of the AKU-IED building, I had the privilege of speaking with him again. His words were not formal speeches to be forgotten; they were deeply personal, reminding me that the heart of education lies in service, in excellence, and in unlocking human potential. His genuine interest in our work gave me the courage to keep innovating and to believe that what we did in the classroom could ripple out into the world.

One more cherished memory is from the tenure of General Zia, when I was honoured to meet His Highness at the airport to receive him. In those brief moments, I saw again the humility, grace, and quiet strength that defined his leadership. No matter the setting—be it an international forum or a simple greeting—he carried himself with the dignity of a leader who served, rather than ruled.

For me, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan was more than a leader—he was a guiding light, whose presence and vision shaped my life's work. I am forever grateful to have walked even a small part of my journey under his inspiration.

His vision for quality education was encapsulated in the term giving; generous, charitable, liberal, bountiful, magnificent person as H.H. believed that when you give as educators it is about shaping minds, building communities, and creating opportunities where none seemed possible. I witnessed first-hand how his belief in education as a tool for human dignity transformed lives—mine included. Every initiative, every school, every program under his leadership carried the hallmark of excellence, compassion, and hope.

Today, I carry forward the lessons he embodied: to lead with integrity, to invest in people, and to believe in the power of knowledge to transform the future. His Highness's legacy lives on in every student empowered, every community strengthened, and every life touched by his vision.

For me, he was more than a leader; he was a guiding light. And for that, I am forever grateful.

AKU -IED students presented hearty congratulations to Ms Rana Hussain on becoming Sind Education Minister in caretaker government

A Tribute to High Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV

Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman, RSPN, Pakistan

I want to share with you my journey in the Rural Support Progammes Network (RSPN) and how it has been shaped and influenced by one of my greatest patrons, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, who left this world on 4th February this year.

If it had not been for the patronage of His Highness, I would not be sharing this with you. His passing away has ended a long chapter in my life. A chapter spanning decades of work with rural communities, many of whom are here today, as are the eight RSPs, all grown out of the AKRSP experience. His patronage of my work changed my life forever. I was most grieved to hear the news of his passing. May Allah bless him and give strength to his family, his community and to all of us who owe him a great debt.

My journey with the RSPN began in 1982, when I was asked by the Aga Khan Foundation Geneva, to run AKRSP. I remember the day when I was contacted by Bob Shaw, then AKF's Director Special Programmes in Geneva, to head AKRSP. Akhter Hameed Khan had given him my name, saying that the only person who can run such a programme is Shoaib Sultan Khan, but he is currently working with UNICEF in Sri Lanka. So Bob Shaw tracked me down and met me. I was skeptical at first because my experience of doing this work in Daud Zai (PARD) had not ended well for me. So, my condition was that if UNICEF seconds me to AKF for five years, I will come. After three years my decision was made and I resigned from UNICEF to stay in AKRSP.

From that day onwards, it has been a journey of 43 years.

I first met His Highness in 1967 when I was DC Kohat and was invited to a dinner in his honour, when Peshawar University conferred an honorary doctorate upon him. My late wife, Musarrat, sat at the same table as His Highness and when she mentioned to His Highness that we had travelled from London to Pakistan and she thought that Switzerland was the most beautiful place she had seen, he asked her if she had not been to Pakistan's Northern Areas, which was so beautiful. Little did I know what the future would hold.

The second time I met His Highness was in 1972 when I received and saw him off at the airport, as Commissioner Karachi. His Highness had come to inaugurate the Aga Khan University. He told me it had taken him twelve years to plan and embark on establishing the Aga Khan University.

It was in 1982, when AKRSP was set up, that I met His Highness in Islamabad to brief him on the program. AKF was present in full force. He listened patiently and, at the end, said that, in geo-political terms the Northern Areas is highly sensitive and islands of prosperity will not survive. He wished every household in the area, irrespective of sect, to benefit from AKRSP. He told me that AKRSP was his programme and if I ever had any problem, I should go directly to

him. This was indeed a surprise for the others present. This is what gave me assurance and confidence. What more could I want? Here I had a benefactor who gave me the freedom and the resources to implement a programme as I wanted. The key message I had conveyed was that if we want to help communities, this cannot be done individually and they must organise. This is what we called social mobilization. His Highness gave full support to this approach.

His Highness's first visit to AKRSP was in May 1983 when he, Begum Salima Aga Khan, Prince Amyn Aga Khan, AKF Geneva and Pakistan officials, Directors of the AKRSP Board, the Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Affairs, other government officials and AKRSP staff had a detailed meeting in AKRSP's Gilgit office. This was after a hectic field visit to Altit, Hopper, Mohammed Abad and Juglote Sai. These visits demonstrated the scope of AKRSP activities, in particular, the initial stage of how Productive Physical Infrastructure or PPIs were identified by village organisations. His Highness took great interest in the process of social mobilisation and PPI identification. He also stressed that AKRSP and other AKDN agencies must make full use of the helicopter he had provided, to make work more efficient and access remote areas.

In 1987 His Highness made his second visit to AKRSP when he flew to Chitral, where I joined him. It was a packed visit. From Chitral we flew down the Ghizer valley where, in Teru, His Highness met with the Jamaat and then decided to climb up to the plantation the Village Organisation had done. There were many in his entourage who could not climb that high and he was quite amused by them. We visited many other villages on that visit, including Gupis, Gahkuch, Sherqila, where the first Women's Organisation was formed, and Sost, Passu, Nagar and Khyber in Hunza valley, where His Highness interacted with women members who had set up a vegetable plot and orchard, improving their incomes and diets. Throughout this long visit he patiently listened to the people, asking questions, showing enormous interest in the change that AKRSP had brought to these remote valleys.

After that I met His Highness numerous times. I met him at Islamabad airport in 1988 when he came for the funeral of late President Zia ul Haq. In the same year, when tragedy befell me and my family, with the passing of my daughter Falaknaz and her children Shan and Pareesa, His Highness asked to personally condole with me and my late wife. I went to Aiglemont, his secretariat in France, to meet him. I was distraught and he gave me comfort. He said to me "If she (Falaknaz) were alive today she would never have wanted you to give up the work you are doing." His strength and support enabled me to carry on. When my wife Musarrat passed away, His Highness sent me a personal message of condolence.

I met His Highness again in 1994, also a meeting that stays in my memory, as I had then decided to leave AKRSP and went to seek his permission to do so. This meeting was at his Paris residence. I remember, as my daughter Shelley and I drove to his house we asked a policeman where the house was, the response was "well, there is only one house on this street." In 1994 I felt my work at AKRSP was done. I had also been contacted by UNDP to be Senior Advisor Rural Development to the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP), which took the social mobilisation programme to six SAARC countries. I had also been involved in setting up other RSPs in Pakistan. At this meeting, His Highness granted me his permission, saying that I should keep 10% of my time for AKRSP. I remained associated with AKRSP for many years since then.

In 2017 I met His Highness on his last visit to Pakistan when the Government of Pakistan invited him for the commemoration of his Diamond Jubilee, and in 2018 I met him in London when he conferred the Pakistan Society Award on me at the Society's annual dinner.

His Highness's patronage led to AKRSP becoming world popular and I received numerous

awards for working with Pakistan's rural poor, as well as the international Magsaysay Award in 1992. When I received the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, His Highness wrote me a letter in April 2019, saying that I had made a truly exceptional contribution in helping millions of rural poor, through my leadership of AKRSP and RSPN. Without his blessings, Pakistan or the Region would not have seen the growth of the RSP movement.

How does one express gratitude to someone who has enabled all this to happen? I can only say how fortunate I have been to have had a patron like His Highness. He was always very kind, very generous. His humility was amazing and he had time for everyone. I have been fortunate to have known His Highness. I have been blessed with something very rare. What more could I have asked for? His leaving this world is a big loss for me.

I wish High Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan all the best. May he continue with the legacy of his incredible father.

His Highness the Aga Khan presents The Pakistan Society Award to Shoaib Sultan Khan, the founding General Manager of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme.

Transcription of Prince Karim Aga Khan IV TV interviews

Q. What sort of the agenda for the rest of your life, if that isn't too moral a question.

A. Perhaps to leave a strengthened community in a more peaceful and happy environment, to contribute to establishing certain ways of doing things, because I had the good fortune of a good education, and I hope that that good fortune will be shared by more and more people. And after all, everyone's life is a passage, and perhaps the most one can do is to have left something behind during that passage, which contributes and assists people to look to their future with more confidence and more stability, more hope.

Q. Is there a conscious process in the grooming of your children in the tradition of service? Your grandfather was President of the League of Nations, you had an uncle who was a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, your father was an Ambassador to the United Nations, it's been a long tradition. Is there a conscious process?

A. Well, my daughter is 18, my eldest son is 17, my second son is 15, they are still in a formal educational process, and at this point in their lives I feel it's appropriate that they should stay in that process. I hope they will be successful in their educational work, and if they are, then later on they will hopefully be associated with various areas of my work, learn about it, they have indicated their interest. But I think at that young age it's probably premature to say to them, you must participate in a formalized training, it's probably not right.

Q. Are you aware, do you have any recollections of any sort of the elements that made up your own grooming, so that when you did take over at the age of 20, you almost hit the ground running?

A. Well, you know, in my case, my grandfather made his choice and it was communicated at the time of his death. So my interests did evolve between the time that I started my education and becoming the Imam. I suspect that will always happen. Because being a hereditary office, the succeeding Imam does not know at what age he will inherit what will be the state of the world in which he will live. Certainly if he has been exposed to the activities that are there, he will be hopefully in a position to take on the work in an appropriate manner. I was very fortunate in the sense that I was interested in two areas. As a person, I was interested in science and therefore in the world around me. And I was interested in the history of Islam, therefore of my faith. And those were intrinsic to me.
They weren't asked for or imposed in any way by my family.

Q. Have you ever had trouble reconciling with your Western education? And you've talked about the upholding of democratic values. Democracy and a hereditary title, has that ever come up for you?

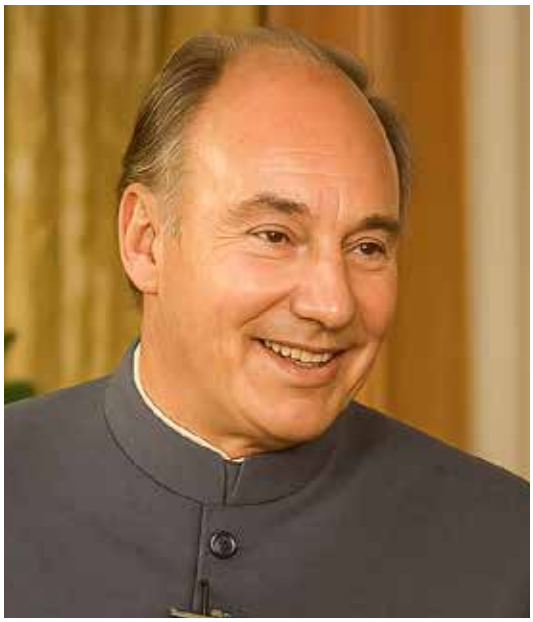
Q. None whatsoever. It's never been a problem in the sense that this is a religious function. The premises on which it exists and has been established and legitimized are there. And I have no problems with it so long as the institution does not affect the secular freedoms of the community. And I don't think it certainly in my lifetime, I have thought that that should never be the case.

Q. What is the premise of a hereditary title?

A. Well, as you know, the prophet indicated that he wished Hazrat Ali to become the guide for the Muslims. This is not an interpretation shared by all, but it is the interpretation of the Shia Muslims. And from there, the succession has been established. So I don't think on that issue I have any qualms. I have been careful not to let the practice of the faith in any way affect or impede the secular rights, the secular rights of the community. And that's one of the reasons why I have not wanted to accept any form of international commitment of any sort, because it would expose me to political pressures, to political involvement. And I don't think in today's world that would be compatible with my work, with my role.

Q. What future role do you see for the Imams in the changing world, in the generations to come? Do you see that changing in any way?

A. Well, as you will have known, I have tried to continue the work that my grandfather did. He had a clear vision of his role in his time. I hope I have a clear vision of my role in my time, and that vision will have to be defined by the Imam. That is, in fact, the premise of Imamate in our interpretation. That is that it is the Imam who interprets in accordance with his time, and that is his absolute prerogative, his right, his duty. So I wouldn't go further than that.

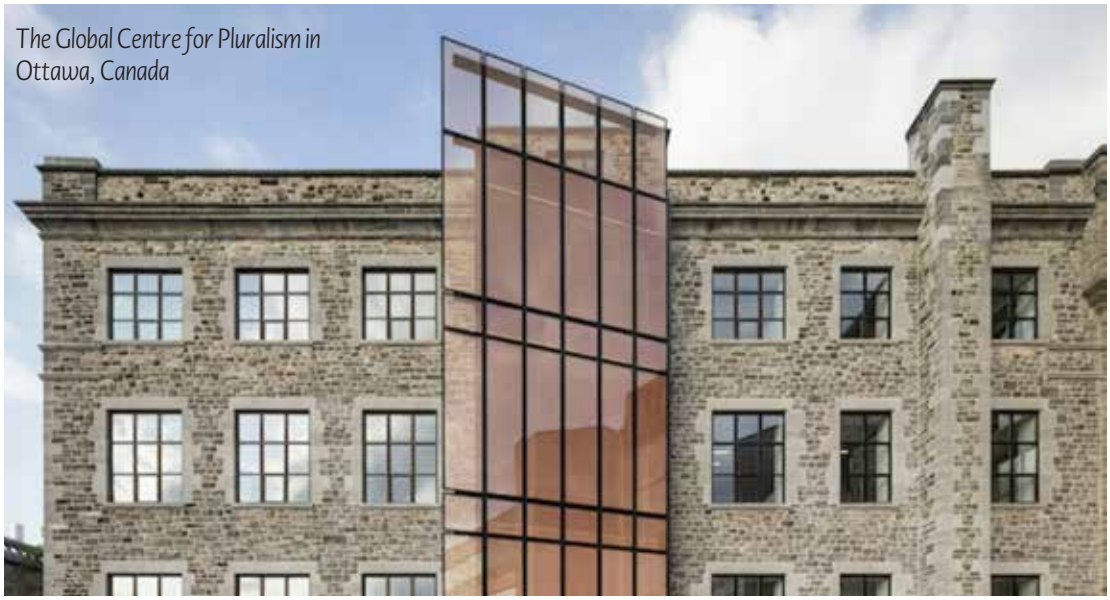


Aga Khan IV

Interviewer

Interview - Pluralism

In 2008, Aga Khan IV established the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, Canada, with a $ 30 m contribution from the Canadian Government. The Centre aims to study and promote pluralism globally.



The Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, Canada

The Aga Khan IV's perspective aligns with the idea that a multicultural world is unavoidable, and accepting global multiculturality is essential for the security of the world.

Q. Of course one of those values is PLURALISM, which has become so much part of your concerns, your beliefs and you are trying to achieve.

A. I think what we are seeing around the world, every time when PLURALISM fails, in one way or the other it ends up in CONFLICT. It is either political conflict or it is tribal conflict or it is religious conflict. There are many expression of conflict. But the fact is that if Society does not accept PLURALISM as a basic fundamental value, than stresses and strains at some stage or the other will come out of the forefront. This will create risk.

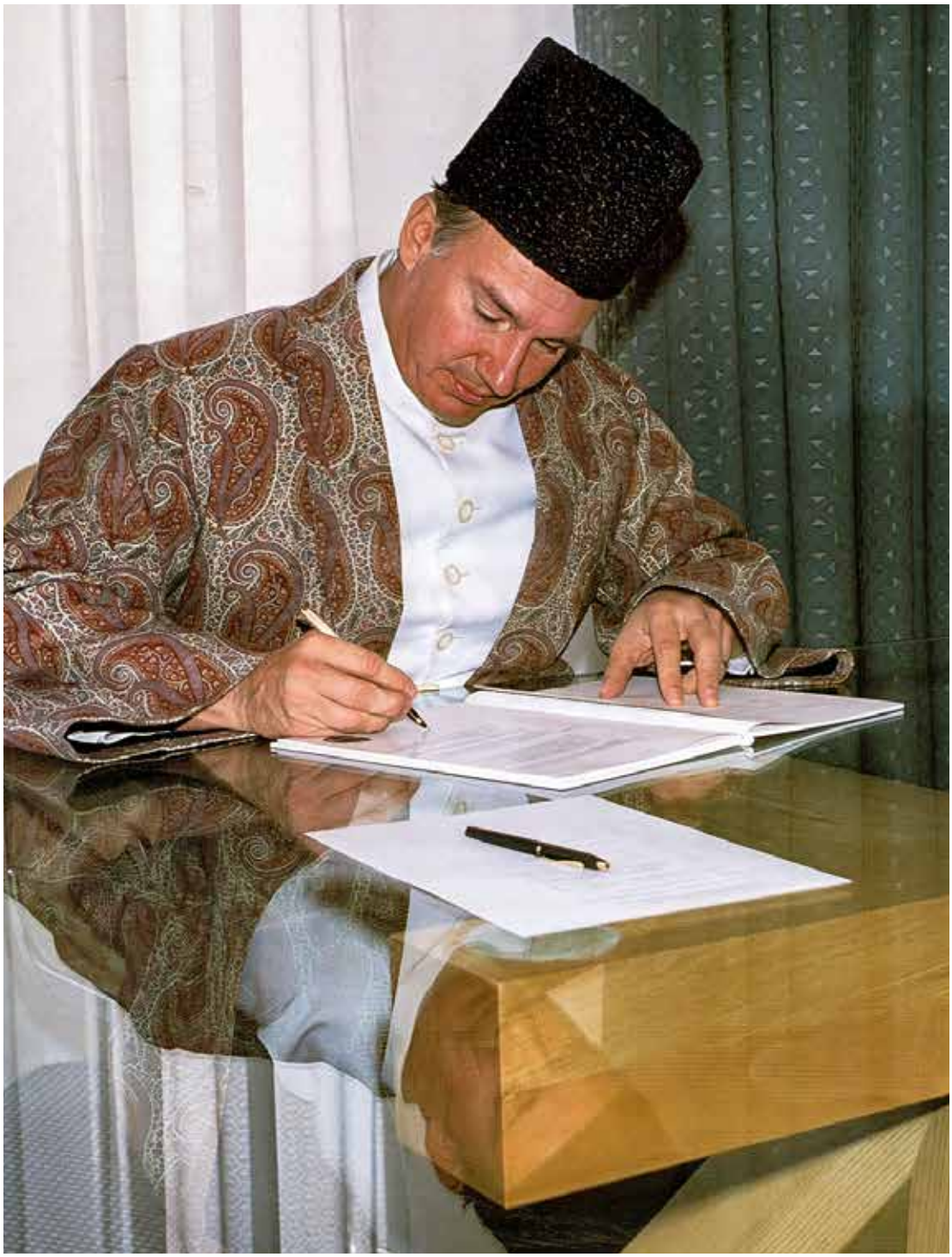
Transcription of Aga Khan TV interview

> ***"A pluralist commitment is rooted in the essential unity of human race."***

Interview - Aga Khan IV on Corruption

"And, in fact, corruption in civil society is probably one of the most damaging forces that we're trying to deal with every day. It's not only corruption at the level of government, it's corruption in education, it's corruption in healthcare, it's corruption in financial institutions, it's corruption in rural support, in distribution of goods. The lack of ethics in civil society is one of the really very, very great issues that we have to deal with. And what we found is that the community organizations, when they come together, what do they look at? It's very exciting. The whole basis of hope is built around best practice. They reject all the things that have damaged them individually, and they come together and say, We want a new future built around new people whom we choose because we trust them."

Vazir Anil Ishani (1947 – 2024)
Member Board of Governers, IIS London (1977), Deputy Chairman, Ismaili Leaders International Forum (1987), Chairman Ismaili Leaders International Forum (1990-1996) and President of the National Council of United Kingdom (1984–1987)



Quotes of Aga Khan IV

Purpose of Life/Service to Humanity

> *The purpose of life is to serve Humanity and contribute to the betterment of Society.*

> *We are not just individuas; we are part of a larger community, and our actions have an impact on those around us.*

> *Faith and spirituality can guide us in our pursuit of a meaningful and purposeful life.*

> *Service to Humanity is a fundamental aspect of our faith and our values.*

> *We are called to serve the poor, the vulnerable, and the margenlised.*

> *By serving others, we not only make a positive impact on their lives, we also find meaning and purpose in our own lives.*

> *The Islamic ethics is that if God has given you the capacity or good fortune to be privileged individual in Society, you have a moral responsibility to the Society.*

> *There are those...who enter the world in such poverty that they are deprived of both the means and the motivation to improve their lot. Unless these unfortunates can be touched with the spark which ignites individual enterprise and determination, they only sink back into renewed apathy*

Education/Knowledge

The key to unlocking the potential of individual and societies lies in Education.

> *Education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it's about developing critical thinking, problem solving, and leadership skills.*

> *We need to empower our young people with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in rapidly changing world.*

> *The Holy Quran sees the discovery of knowledge as a spiritual responsibility, enable us to better understand and more ably serve God's creation.*

> *I have felt that there is one most urgent need. This is education - a word we use too freely, often without realizing all that means. I am convinced that the future of Muslims depends on it.*

> *When I say education, I mean more than acquisition of knowledge, more than facts, figures and book work. Education is life-long experience in which qualities such as integrity, mental discipline, humility and honesty should form, particularly during the early years.*

> *The roots we inherit from our history - linking us to a particular past - are a great source of strengh and joy and inspiration. And a sound educational systm should help nourish those roots.*

> *Islam is probably the one (faith) that places the greatest emphasis on knowledge. The purpose is to understand God's creation.*

> *So rather than talk about clashing civilizations, I begane to talk - again and again, as some of you may recall - about a clash of ingorances. And assumption behind that phrase was that ignorance could yield to understanding through the power of education.*

Health

> *Good health is not just the absence of disease; it's state of complete physical, mental, and social well being.*

> *Investing in health is investing in human development and economic growth.*

> *We need to work together to build strong health systems that provide quality care to all.*

> He who has health, has hope, and he has hope, has everything and that health is not valued till sickness come.

Women Empowerment

> Empowering women is essential for the development of our societies and economics.

> Women are not just beneficiaries of development; they are also key drivers of change.

> We need to provide women with the opportunities and resources they need to succeed, including education, training, and access to finance.

> I find it very difficult to validate the concept, for example, that Islam says that a woman cannot work. I think what Islam says is that men and women have to live in a dignified manner in civil society.

> Leadership qualities are not gender driven. So actually, if you don't respect the fact that both genders have competencies, outstanding capabilities, you are damaging your community by not appointing those people.

Faith/Hope/Intellect

> And you will be asking yourselves how,as nano-players to the global scene, you could cause positive change to happen for yourselves, your families, your peoples. My answers is HOPE. Fortunately, just as fear can be infectious, so hope is infectious. When individuals, families and communities, or even nations, come together around new found HOPE....that new momentum can be unstoppable.

> It is the light of Intellect which distinguishes the complete human being from the human animal and developing that intellect requires free enquiry.

> *The man of faith who fails to pursue intellectual search is likely to have only a limited comprehension of Allah's creation. Indeed, it is man's intellect that enables him to expands his vision of that creation. Eleven hundred years ago, Al-Kindi wrote, "no one is diminished by the truth, rather does the truth ennoble all.*

Plusarlism

> *In the troubled times in which we live, it is important to remember and honour, a vision of a pluralistic society. Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples'cultures, social structures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an independent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for progress and development, it is vital to our existence.*

> *We need in the 'Ummah' to move away from the normative attitudes towards the acceptance of pluralism of the "'Ummah", and that pluralism starts from the time of the Prophet himself and Hadith (Saying of Prophet Mohammed) as well as Prophet 's historical footprints show that in the life time of Prophet himself he knew that there would be pluralism in the interpretation of the faith.*

> *I think that one of the greatest challenges for the entire world will be finding ways in which we can all achieve a deeper understanding of the other, and what makes each of us distinct as human beings and as communities.*

> *One of the great stumbling blocks to the advance of pluralism, in my view, is simple human arrogance. All of the world's greatest religions warns against self-righteousness - yet too many are still tempted to play God themselves - rather than recognizing their humility before Divine.*

Photos of Aga Khan IV

Childhod

Leading Prayer in Nairobi, Kenya

Aga Khan IV At Harward Univesity

Aga Khan IV as a sportsman

Aga Khan Universities Hospitals in Different Countries

Aga Khan Hospital Karachi Pakistan

Aga Khan University Centre, Nairobi, Kenya

Aga Khan Hospital, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

University of Central Asia, Khorog Campus, AKDN

Aga Khan Hospital, Kampala, Uganda Inugrated on Sept 9, 2025

Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. Established 1000 Years ago by Fatimid Dynasty

Bab al-Futuh (Victory Gate) Cairo, Egypt, lasting legacy in architecture built in 1087 CE during Fatmid Caliph, Al-Mustanserbillah's time with inscription "ALIYUN WALI ALLAH". (Ali is the friend of God). It has survived about 1000 years.

Image courtesy by: Shutterstock

House of Knowledge, Cairo, Egypt

Diwan of the Ismaili Imamat

Ismaili Center, Lisbon, Portugal

Diwan of the Ismaili Imamat, Lisbon, Portugal

Ismaili Centers

Ismaili Center, Dubai (UAE)

Ismaili Center, Toronto, Canada

Ismaili Center, Vancouver, Canada

Ismaili Centre, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Ismaili Center, London

Ismaili Jamatkhana in Kabul, Afghanistan

First Ismaili Center in Houston, Texas, U.S.A., inaugrated on November 6, 2025 by Prince Rahim Aga Khan V

Aga Khan Museum Toronto, Canada

The primary objective of Aga Khan Museum is to foster understanding and appreciation of Muslim Arts and Cultures and their connection to other cultures. It also strives to promote Pluralism.

Honorary Citizenship of Canada and Doctorate Degrees from prestegious Univerties of Canada

H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV awarded honorary citizenship of Canada

Honorary Doctorate Degree awarded to H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan by University of Columbia Vancouver, Canada

Honorary Doctorate Degree awarded to H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan IV by University of Calgary, Canada

Honorary Doctorate Degree awarded to H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan by University of Alberta

Legacy of Entrepreneurial Ventures

Sardinia Resort in Italy developed by Aga Khan IV in 1960

Olbia Costa Smeralda, International Airport in Italy has been renamed as Prince Karim Aga Khan IV International Airport in his memory

Nation Media Group, East Africa

Hotels

Serena Hotels and Resort, Islamabad

Serena Hotel, Faisalabad

Serena Hotel, Quetta

Serena Hotels, Gilgit

Serena Hotel, Hunza

Serena Hotel, Kabul

Serena Hotels, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Serena Hotel, Nairobi

Serena Hotel, Kampala

Insurance and Banks

Habib Bank Limited, Karachi

Jubilee General Insurance Company Limited Karachi

Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited Karachi

Aga KhanIV meeting with Community

Aga Khan IV. 49th Imam meeting followers

Aga KhanIV with Family and Community Leaders

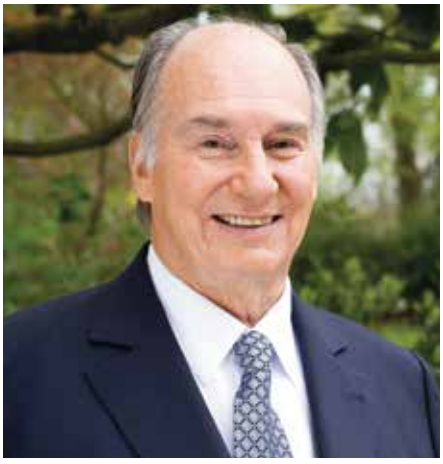
Aga Khan IV on the occasion of 67th years Imamat (11th July 2024) with Prince Rahim, his 2 sons Prince Irfan & Prince Sinan, Prince Ali Mohammed and Leaders of Ismaili Community

The Five Aga Khan (1936 - 1925)

Aga Hasan Ali Shah Aga Khan I
(1804-1881)

Aga Ali Shah Aga Khan II
(1830-1885)

Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III
(1877-1957)



H.H. *Prince Kareem Aga Khan IV*
(1936-2025)

H.H. *Prince Rahim Aga Khan V*
(1971)

Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III Family

Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III President, Leagure of Nations

Prince Mehdi Aga Khan, passed away in infancy

Prince Aly Khan Pakistan Ambassador to the United Nations

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Prince Ali Khan Family

Prince Ali Khan, Ambassador, UNO

Pince Karim Aga Khan IV

Prince Amin Aga Khan

Princess Yasmeen Aga Khan

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV Family

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV

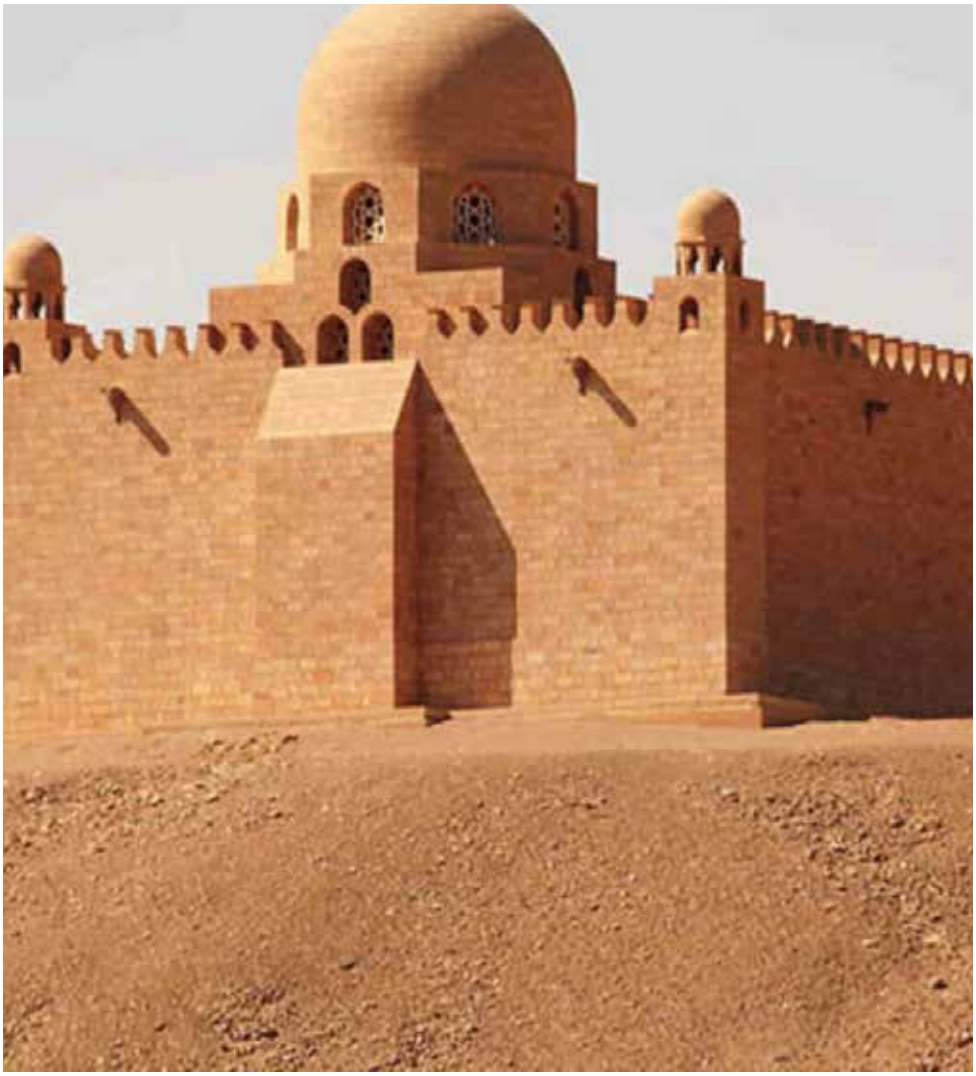
Princess Zehra Aga Khan

Prince Rahim Aga Khan V

Prince Hussain Aga Khan

Prince Ali Mohammed Aga Khan

Aga Khan Masoleum, Aswan - Egypt

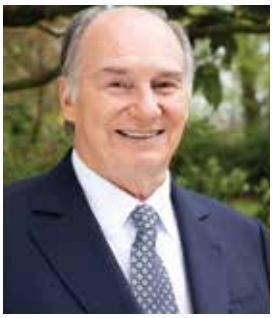


Mausoleum of Aga Khan - Aswan, Egypt

Buried at Aga Khan Mausoleum - Aswan, Egypt

Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan III

Umme Habiba wife of Aga Khan III



H.H. *Prince Karin Aga Khan*

International Media Reporting of Aga Khan IV passing away

The passing of Aga Khan IV on February 4, 2025, was met with an outpouring of tributes from global leaders and international media outlets. Here are some notable ones:

Global Leaders' Tributes

- **United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres:**
  Described Aga Khan IV as "a symbol of peace, tolerance, and compassion in our troubled world".

- **Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau:**
  Referred to Aga Khan IV as "a longtime family friend and an extraordinarily compassionate global leader" who was passionate about Canada and will be deeply missed.

- **Pakistan's Prime Minister:**
  Eulogized Aga Khan IV as "a man of vision, faith, and generosity" whose contributions to alleviating poverty and supporting marginalized communities were notable.

- **Kenya's President William Ruto:**
  Described Aga Khan IV as "an extraordinary leader who dedicated his life to helping the vulnerable through his charitable work in healthcare and education".

- **Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Zanzibar President Hussein Mwinyi:**
  Also paid their respects to Aga Khan IV, acknowledging his humanitarian work and legacy [1] [2].

International Media Coverage

- **BBC News, The Guardian, Reuters**, and **Al Jazeera** covered the story of Aga Khan IV's passing, highlighting his legacy as a spiritual leader and philanthropist.

- **Khaleej Times** reported on Aga Khan IV's death, noting his commitment to humanitarian efforts and his influence on education and development.

- **The Standard** published an article on the global leaders who mourned Aga Khan IV, including tributes from various African leaders [3] [4].

University Tributes

- **University of Alberta:** Paid tribute to Aga Khan IV, recognizing his lifelong contributions to leadership and service, and noting his influence on education and development. The university also highlighted the Aga Khan Garden, which he gifted in 2018 .

Recommended Books on Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims

1) "The Ismaili Imams: A Biographical History" by Dr. Farhad Daftary. Published by I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies on October 29, 2020.

2) The First Aga Khan: Memoirs of the 46th Ismaili Imam by Hasan 'Ali Shah, edited and translated by D. Beben and D. Mohammed Poor.
Published in London in 2018.

3) The Memoirs of Aga Khan: World Enough and Time by Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah, Aga Khan III . Published in London in 1954.

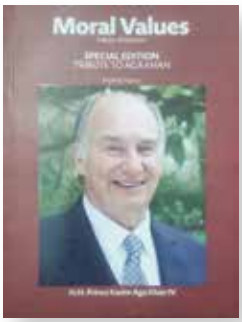
4) Selected Speeches and Writings of Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah, edited by K.K. Aziz. Published in London in 1997-1998.

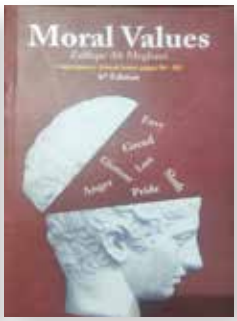
5) Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia by Ali S. Asani. Published in London in 2002.

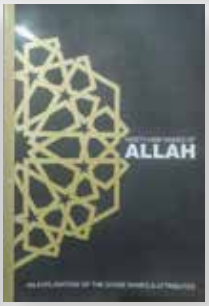
The list of books dealing with different aspects of the Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqa (persuasion) of Islam is not exhaustive but illustrative. It should be read in juxtaposition with Dr Farhad Daftary's seminal work "A Biographical History" from which it has been extracted . For further reading see the website of the Institute of Ismaili Studies at:

http:www.iis.ac.uk/publication-listing/
and
AKDN at:
https://the.akdn

Other Publications of Zulfiqar Ali Meghani







H. H. Prince Rahim Aga Khan V, Heridetory 50th Imam of Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims

H H Prince Shah Rahim Aga Khan V with his two sons. Prince Irfan and Prince Sanan

PART II

Institutions founded by Aga Khan IV under Aga Khan Development Network

Institutions founded by Aga Khan IV under Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)

AKDN

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development

AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

AKRSP

Aga Khan Rural Support Programme

آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال

The Aga Khan University Hospital

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Aga Khan Award for Architecture

FOCUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Focus Humanitarian Assistance

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PAKISTAN

آغا خان یونیورسٹی ایگزامینیشن بورڈ

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD

Aga Khan Education Services

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan

Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED)

Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development

AKFED was established in 1984 by His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. AKFED is a private, international development finance institution dedicated to promoting entrepreneurship and building economically sound enterprises in developing countries. As part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), AKFED works to improve the quality of life in Asia and Africa by fostering economic growth and development.

Mission

AKFED's mission is to promote economic development and improve living standards in developing countries by investing in and operating companies that provide essential goods and services, create employment opportunities, and stimulate economic growth. The organization focuses on building sustainable enterprises, developing local human resources, and promoting private sector development.

Board

AKFED is governed by a Board of Directors, headed by H H Rahim Aga Khan V as successor of H H Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. The Board provides strategic guidance and oversight to ensure AKFED's activities align with its mission and objectives.

Activities and Countries

AKFED operates in 16 countries across Africa, South Asia, and Central Asia, including, Afghanistan, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Mauritius,- Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda.

AKFED's activities include:

• **Financial Services:** Investing in banks and insurance companies to enhance financial inclusion and promote economic growth.

• **Industrial Promotion Services (IPS):** Supporting private enterprise and industrial development through investments in manufacturing, agriculture, and infrastructure.

• **Tourism Promotion Services (TPS):** Developing sustainable tourism initiatives to promote economic growth and create employment opportunities.

Media Services: Promoting independent media and freedom of expression through investments in media companies.

Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED)

From the moment His Highness set out to spark private enterprise in the world's most underserved regions, AKFED has turned that promise into a living reality. Across sixteen nations it has helped build more than seventy companies, generating over US $4 billion in revenue, sustaining 60,000 direct jobs and indirectly supporting half a million people, while pioneering micro-finance that has reached nearly 3 million clients—half of them women. By blending equity, managerial expertise and a long-term commitment to reinvest profits, AKFED has not only created profitable businesses but also lifted entire communities, proving that sustainable development and financial returns can go hand in hand. As the Imam envisioned, the fund continues to ignite a virtuous circle of enterprise, dignity and hope for generations to come.

Timeline Milestones

1984 – AKFED is founded by His Highness the Aga Khan IV to stimulate private-sector growth in low-income regions.

1990 – First major investment in the East African banking sector, laying the groundwork for later financial-inclusion initiatives.

1995– Launch of the Pamir Power Project in Tajikistan, the first large-scale hydro-electric venture in the region, adding 30 MW to the national grid.

1999 – Acquisition of a stake in Roshan, Afghanistan's first mobile-phone operator, brings connectivity to millions.

2002 - Micro Finance Bank emerged in Pakistan.

2004 - AKFED acquired 51% share in Habib Bank Limited (HBL). HBL now holds 76% share in Microfinance Bank. HBL has more than 1,600 branches in Pakistan and is a presence in more than 25 countries. HBL channels remittances, supports SMEs, and finances agriculture across the country, making a vital conduit for AKFED's broader economic - development goal.

2004 – Entry into the Kenyan agri-business market with a green-bean export operation that supports over 50,000 farmers with small holdings.

2008 – Creation of the AKFED-KfW "Start-up Pakistan" partnership, a €10 million fund aimed at youth and women entrepreneurs.

2012 – Expansion into renewable energy with the Azito Energy plant in Côte d'Ivoire, a 300 MW natural-gas-to-power project that powers Abidjan and surrounding areas.

2016 – Launch of the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance (AKAM) as a sister entity, deepening financial-inclusion efforts across the network. AKAM manages a loan portfolio of over UD $ 147 millions, serving 287,000 clients across 13 countries.

2020 – Publication of the first integrated impact report, showing US $4.3 billion in revenue and 60,000 direct jobs across 16 countries.

2023 – AKFED's green-energy portfolio surpasses 50 MW of installed capacity, including solar farms in Kenya and wind projects in Pakistan.

2025 – Completion of the Atabad Lake access road in Gilgit-Baltistan, a humanitarian-infrastructure project that also opens trade routes for local communities.

Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) – A Snapshot of Impact, Innovation, and Community-Driven Development

AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

Founded in 1967 by His Highness the Aga Khan IV, the Aga Khan Foundation is the development arm of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Its mission is simple yet ambitious: "to improve the quality of life for the world's most vulnerable people by supporting community-led solutions that are sustainable, inclusive and scalable."

AKF works in more than 18 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe, reaching roughly 20 million people each year—over half of them women. What sets AKF apart is its people--first approach: programmes are designed with communities, not for them. Local staff—about 4,000 people, 99 % of whom are from the regions they serve—ensure that interventions respect cultural context while applying global best practices.

Core Focus Areas

Area What AKF Does Key Outcomes:

Early Childhood Development

Home-based learning kits, teacher training, nutrition programmes Over 2.2 million children reached; school readiness scores up 30 % in pilot sites Education School construction, teacher-professional development, girls-scholarship schemes 1 million+ learners benefiting from improved facilities; girls' enrolment up 15 % in targeted districts.

Health & Nutrition Community health workers, maternal-child clinics, nutrition-education campaigns Maternal mortality reduced by 20 % in project areas; stunting rates down 12 % Agricul-

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Health & Nutrition Community health workers, maternal-child clinics, nutrition-education campaigns Maternal mortality reduced by 20 % in project areas; stunting rates down 12 % Agriculture & Food Security Climate-smart farming, micro-irrigation, farmer-field schools Crop yields increased up to 40 % for smallholders; household food-security improved for 70,000 families Civil Society

Capacity-building for NGOs, community-organizing grants, advocacy platforms 23,000 civil-society partners strengthened; 6 million people indirectly served.

Work & Enterprise Micro-finance, entrepreneur-

ship training, market-linkage programmes 400,000 households benefitted from income--generating activities; loan repayment rates ≈ 98 %.

Climate Resilience Watershed management, renewable-energy installations, disaster-risk mapping 828 villages now have hazard maps; 500,000 people with safer water and sanitation

These seven pillars are deliberately interconnected—a health programme will include nutrition education, a school-building project will incorporate climate-resilient design, and an agriculture initiative will link farmers to micro-finance.

Flagship Initiatives

- Accelerate Prosperity – A regional entrepreneurship programme that mentors start-ups in Central and South Asia, helping them access seed capital and market opportunities. Since 2020, more than 150 ventures have been supported, creating over 3,000 jobs.

- Schools2030 – A ten-year learning-improvement campaign operating in ten countries. By co-creating teacher-led innovations, the initiative aims to meet Sustainable Develop-

How You Can Get Involved:

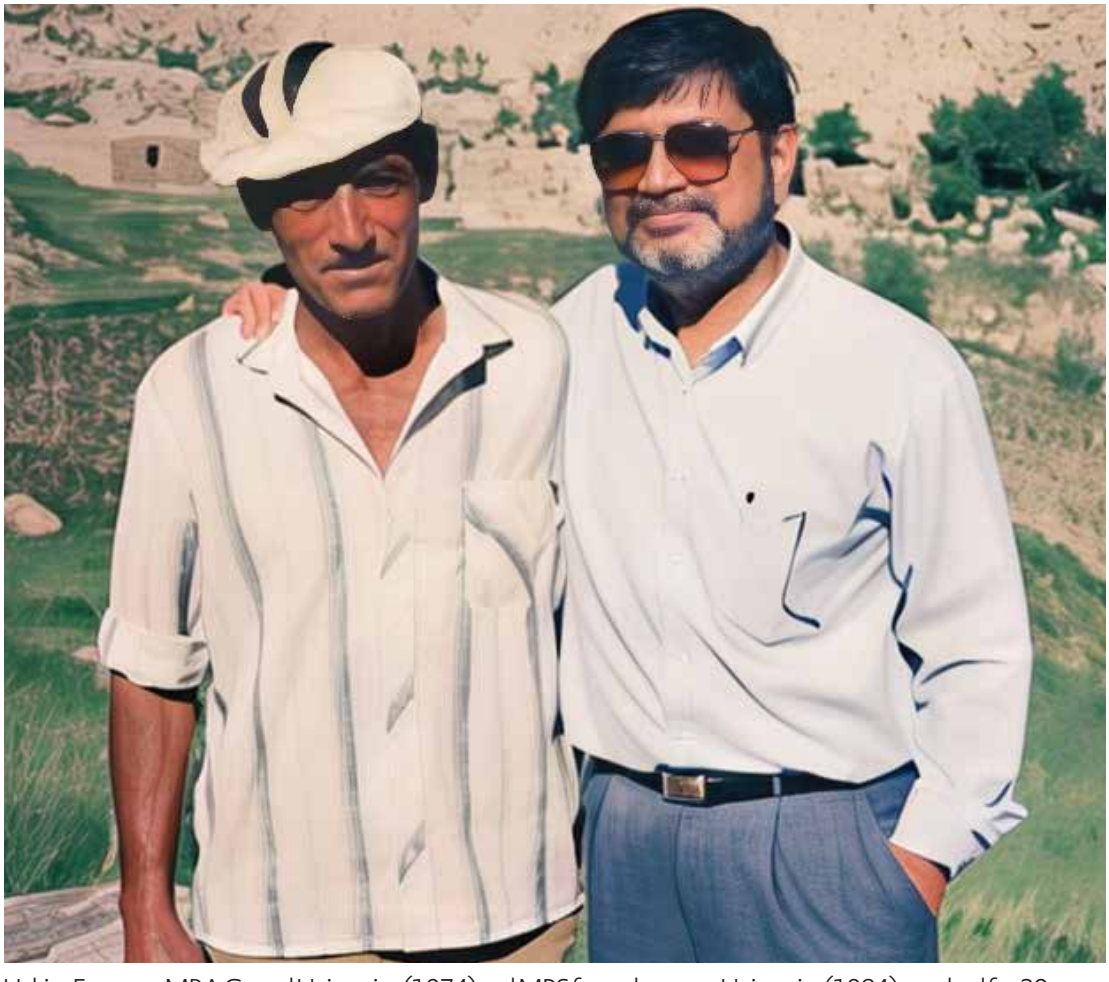
1. Donate – Contributions can be earmarked for a specific focus area or left unrestricted to support the most urgent needs.

2. Volunteer – AKF runs short-term assignments for professionals in monitoring & evaluation, education, health and more.

3. Partner – NGOs, academic institutions and private firms can collaborate on research, technology transfer or joint grant applications.

4. Spread the Word – Share success stories from AKF's Learning Hub or the annual report to inspire others to join the movement.

THE AGA KHAN FOUNDATION PROVES THAT LARGE-SCALE IMPACT DOESN'T HAVE TO COME FROM TOP-DOWN MANDATE. BY LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE IT SERVES, EMPOWERING LOCAL LEADERS AND WEAVING TOGETHER EDUCATION, HEALTH, AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE ACTION, AKF CREATES A VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF RESILIENCE THAT OUTLIVES ANY SINGLE PROJECT.



Hakim Feerasta,MBA Cornel University (1974)and MPS from the same University(1984), worked for 30 years with AKDN including CEO AKF Pakistan and CEO AKF Tajikistan.
He played a significant role in fighting poverty in Central Asia. He passed away on 21-7-2024 in Toronto, Canada

Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)

A Living Legacy of His Highness the Aga Khan IV's Vision for Community-Led Development
By: Jamil Uddin & Zulfiqar Ali Khan

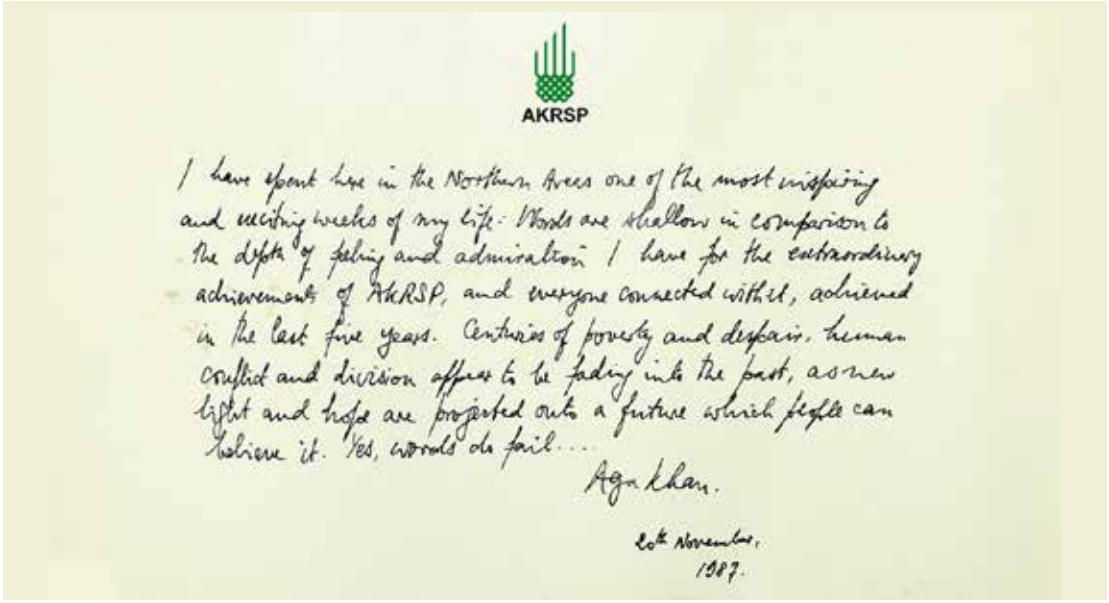
His Highness the Aga Khan IV visiting the Teru Irrigation and Plantation Project (18 November 1987)

More than three decades ago, during a visit to Gilgit-Baltistan, His Highness Prince Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV spent a week travelling through the Northern Areas, meeting communities and witnessing first-hand the changes taking root across the region. It was a visit that left a deep impression.

Dated 20 November 1987, his handwritten inscription in AKRSP's visitors' book describes it as "one of the most inspiring and exciting weeks" of his life. Reflecting on what had been achieved through AKRSP in just five years, His Highness noted that words felt inadequate to convey his admiration for the programme and for all those connected with it. He observed that centuries marked by poverty, despair, conflict, and division appeared to be receding, replaced by new light and hope—hope grounded in people's belief in a future they could shape for themselves. "Yes," he concluded, "words do fail."

This reflection, penned in Gilgit more than three decades ago, continues to resonate. It offers not only a personal testament to His Highness's engagement with the communities of the region, but also a profound insight into the philosophy that underpins AKRSP.

Among the many enduring contributions of His Highness the Aga Khan IV to global development, AKRSP represents a distinctive expression of his vision for community-led development, centred on building local institutions, strengthening collective action, and enabling communities to manage their own development. Conceived as a long-term


AKRSP

I have spent here in the Northern Areas one of the most inspiring and exciting weeks of my life. Words are shallow in comparison to the depth of feeling and admiration I have for the extraordinary achievements of AKRSP, and everyone connected with it, achieved in the last five years. Centuries of poverty and despair, human conflict and division appear to be fading into the past, as new light and hope are projected onto a future which people can believe it. Yes, words do fail....

Aga Khan.

20th November, 1987.

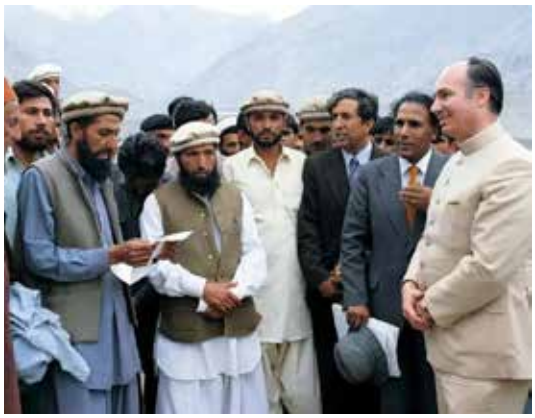
During his visit to Gilgit-Baltistan on 20th November 1987, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV recorded his reflections on the impact of AKRSP in the guest book at the programme's Core Office in Gilgit.

process of social transformation rather than a short-term intervention, AKRSP stands today as one of the pioneering and widely replicated models of community-driven development in the world.

AKRSP's Inception

AKRSP was established in 1982 by the Aga Khan Foundation with the aim of improving the quality of life of the local communities, primarily in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. The programme initially began in Gilgit district before expanding to all five districts of the then Northern Areas—later renamed Gilgit-Baltistan—as well as to Chitral district of the former North-West Frontier Province, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Operating under the social development pillar of the Aga Khan Development Network, AKRSP complements other AKDN institutions by focusing on strengthening institutions and empowering civil society through integrated, community-led development. This alignment reflects a holistic understanding of transformation, recognising that sustainable development requires simultaneous investment in people, institutions, infrastructure, and shared values.



His Highness the Aga Khan IV meeting with members of a Village Organisation in Jaglote, Gilgit, May 1983.

Context Before AKRSP: Isolation, Transition, and the Promise of Change

At the time of AKRSP's inception, these regions were among the poorest and most geographically isolated parts of Pakistan. They were characterised by what may be described as a spatial poverty trap, shaped by weak human, physical, and natural endowments. The population depended largely on subsistence agriculture, while chronic deficits persisted in basic social services, physical infrastruc-

ture, and access to markets.

Simultaneously, the region was undergoing a transition from traditional princely systems to local government structures, reshaping governance arrangements and patterns of community participation. Although the construction of the Karakoram Highway had begun to physically connect the region with Pakistan's national mainstream, it was increasingly evident that infrastructure alone could not transform lives or unlock human potential.

Organisation, Skills, and Capital: The Initial Core of the AKRSP Model

AKRSP was created with a philosophy that local communities possess the ability to plan and manage their own development, provided they are organised and given access to skills and capital. In its early years, AKRSP was guided by two interlinked objectives: to contribute to doubling the incomes of the people of Gilgit, Baltistan, and Chitral over a ten-year period, and to develop replicable approaches for community development. These objectives were underpinned by the simple yet powerful framework based on organisation, skills, and capital.

Communities were first supported to organise themselves into village and women's organisations (V/WOs), which served as platforms for collective decision-making, mutual accountability, and local planning. Through these institutions, communities were able to identify shared priorities, manage resources, and engage constructively with government departments and development partners. Alongside social organisation, AKRSP invested heavily in building human capacity through training, learning, and leadership development. Skills development extended beyond technical competencies to include organisational management, financial literacy, credit administration, and participatory governance.

Access to capital was facilitated through savings mobilisation, credit mechanisms, and productive investments, enabling communities to translate plans into action. Members were encouraged to save regularly and to build capacities ranging from accounts management to the introduction of cash crops and income-generating activities, ensuring long-term socio-economic resilience. Over time, V/WOs federated into Local Support Organisations (LSOs), providing scale, sustainability, and a collective voice at higher levels. These institutions

AKRSP's *first community dialogue in Sherqilla, Ghizer* (1982), *marking the start of its community mobilization efforts.*

became the backbone of participatory development, ensuring that communities were not passive recipients of aid but active architects of their own future.

This participatory approach, which initially began with V/WOs, has continued to evolve. Today, AKRSP works through LSOs and increasingly engages with broader, more inclusive civil society groups, while maintaining its core commitment to community engagement and locally driven development.

Inspiring a National and Global Movement

One of AKRSP's most far-reaching contributions lies in its influence beyond its own programme areas. Beginning in the late 1980s, its principles inspired the emergence of Pakistan's nationwide Rural Support Programme (RSP) movement. Institutions such as the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), the Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), and the Gilgit-Baltistan Rural Support Programme (GBRSP) were all founded on AKRSP's community development philosophy.

National policy frameworks and institutions, including the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), later adopted AKRSP's social mobilisation model as a core approach to rural poverty reduction. Beyond Pakistan, the AKRSP approach has informed rural development programmes across South and Central Asia and parts of Africa, demonstrating its adaptability and global relevance across diverse contexts.

The Current Strategic Direction

In 2021, the Aga Khan Foundation and AKRSP initiated a comprehensive review process to shape the organisation's current strategic direction. This review recognised evolving community needs, national and regional trends, programme gaps, and the need for renewed organisational focus. Building on its longstanding presence in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, AKRSP expanded its operations to under-served areas, including Diamer district in 2022 and the coastal districts of Thatta, Sujawal, and Badin in Sindh in 2024.

The organisation's focus has gradually evolved from primarily improving the incomes to improving the broader elements of quality of life. This shift is reflected in its work across seven thematic areas encompassing agriculture and food security, civil society strengthening, climate resilience, early childhood development, education, health and nutrition, and work and enterprise. Throughout this evolution, AKRSP's signature community-driven approach—mobilising, engaging, and strengthening civil society participation—has remained central.

A cross-cutting emphasis continues to be placed on building sustainable assets such as roads, bridges, energy systems, irrigation facilities, greenhouses, and digital connectivity. These investments address spatial poverty in remote and high-altitude areas, promote gender equality, and ensure the inclusion of both women and men across all development processes.

Expanding Horizons: From Mountain Valleys to Coastal Sindh

In Sindh, AKRSP is promoting regenerative farming, clean energy solutions, and climate-resilient coastal livelihoods.

Over more than four decades, AKRSP's geographic reach has steadily expanded. What began in the high mountain valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral now extends across all ten districts of Gilgit-Baltistan, both districts of Chitral in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Diamer district, and the coastal districts of Thatta, Sujawal, and Badin in Sindh. Today, AKRSP works across nearly 104,000 square kilometres, reaching almost four million people living in more than 625,000 house-

holds. This expansion reflects both the adaptability of the AKRSP model and its relevance across diverse geographic, cultural, and socio-economic contexts.

Enduring Impact and Stewardship

His Highness the Aga Khan IV at the Barkulti V/WO Livestock Improvement Project Ghizer. (20 November 1987).

His Highness the Aga Khan IV inspecting a cabbage produced by Khyber V/WO in Hunza. (19 November 1987).

The scale of AKRSP's achievements is substantial, but their true value lies in their impact on everyday life. Thousands of community organisations have been established, critical infrastructure has been built and rehabilitated, and hundreds of thousands of women and men have gained new skills and opportunities. Long before climate change became a mainstream global concern, AKRSP recognised the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems and responded through clean energy initiatives, water management systems, passive solar technologies, large-scale afforestation, and regenerative agriculture.

World Bank assessments of AKRSP indicate that within its first decade, programme interventions contributed to a doubling of average incomes for nearly one million people in northern Pakistan.

Over time, AKRSP has completed more than 5,000 small and medium-scale infrastructure projects, benefiting over 380,000 households through bridges, roads, irrigation channels, and hydropower units. Tens of millions of trees have been planted, marginal lands rehabilitated, and more than 5,378 community organisations have established. These organisations have collectively mobilised savings exceeding PKR 500 million and disbursed approximately PKR 2 billion in loans.

Seen barren during His Highness the Aga Khan IV's visit in 1987, Teru is now a forested landscape shaped by community effort and AKRSP support.

The First Micro Finance Bank Limited, Pakistan (FMFB-P) was established in 2002 as a nationwide microfinance bank through a structured transformation of the credit and savings section of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. FMFB-P was later transformed into HBL Microfinance Bank Ltd, with the mission of responding to poverty and contributing to the social and economic well-being of society by providing opportunities to thousands of underprivileged households.

With support from AKRSP, a hand-dug tunnel and irrigation channel in the Pak-China border town of Sost transformed barren land into fertile farms, paving the way for a thriving trade hub and growing community.

AKRSP has also trained more than 126,000 women and men in technical and vocational skills. In addition, AKRSP has established over 163 micro-hydropower plants with a combined installed capacity of approximately 18 megawatts, providing clean energy to more than 30,000 households across Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. This work has earned national and international recognition, including the Ashden Award for Sustainable Energy and the Energy Globe Award.

Today, AKRSP collaborates with a wide range of partners and donors, including international development agencies, government bodies, non-governmental organisations, and private sector entities. These partnerships play a critical role in advancing the organisation's mission to enhance livelihoods, foster economic growth, and promote social development.

AKRSP's development journey reflects both continuity and innovation, building on its early institutional development, natural resource management and livelihood interventions while continuously adapting to emerging needs and evolving aspirations of communities. From climate resilience and clean energy to youth entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, and coastal livelihoods, the programme has remained responsive to changing contexts without losing sight of its founding principles.

AKRSP today stands as a living tribute to His Highness the Aga Khan IV's vision of development—one grounded in trust, collective action, and community leadership. Its story is the story of organised communities, empowered women, innovative youth, and resilient communities that demonstrate that lasting change is possible when people are placed at the centre of their own development.

His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan inaugurates the Software Technology Park in Hunza (2024) before assuming the role of the 50th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

The Aga Khan University (AKU)

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Aga Khan University is the flagship institution of AKDN founded by H H Prince Karim Aga Khan in 1983.

AKU operates hospitals and health centers across Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, with academic entities also present in the United Kingdom and Afghanistan. These hospitals were established at different times and have made significant impacts on healthcare and medical education in their respective regions.

Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan

The hospital began operations and admitted its first patient in 1985.

Achievements/Impacts:

It is Pakistan's first private university hospital and a not-for-profit institution.
It was the first hospital in the country to receive accreditation from the U.S.-based Joint Commission International (JCI), the "gold standard" in global healthcare, in 2006, inspiring other local hospitals to follow suit.

Its clinical laboratories are the first in Pakistan to be accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP).

It provides high-quality secondary and tertiary care to over 50,000 hospitalized patients and approximately 600,000 outpatients annually.

Through its Patient Welfare Programme and Zakat programmes, it has provided millions of dollars in free or reduced-cost care to low-income patients, ensuring access to quality healthcare regardless of financial need.

It has been ranked the #1 Medical College by the Higher Education Commission in Pakistan and is a leading source of health research in the developing world.

Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya

The institution first opened as a community hospital in 1958 and was upgraded to a full University Hospital under AKU management in 2005.

Achievements/Impacts:

It was the first healthcare institution in East Africa to attain JCI accreditation in July 2013, setting a new benchmark for quality healthcare in the region.

It has developed state-of-the-art programs for the management of major illnesses, including cancer and cardiovascular diseases, saving many East African patients the expense and inconvenience of traveling abroad for treatment.

The hospital has been certified as a JCI Centre of Excellence for the management of acute primary stroke and heart attacks.

It has conducted the first-in-Africa cancer drug clinical trial.

It serves as a leading referral and teaching hospital, offering postgraduate medical education programs and conducting free medical camps and surgeries for the needy in low-income areas.

Other AKU Locations

Tanzania and Uganda:

AKU expanded its programs to these countries starting in 2000-2001, initially with nursing and teacher education. The Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam is also part of the system and has plans for an expansion to include postgraduate residency programs.

Afghanistan: AKU manages the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul, established in 2006.

United Kingdom: The Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC) was established in London in 2002.

Across all its locations, the Aga Khan University system is recognized for its commitment to high-quality care, research that addresses local challenges (e.g., maternal and child health), and an expansive patient welfare system that ensures access for all economic segments of society.

As a beacon of hope and excellence in education and healthcare, the Aga Khan University continues to transform lives and communities across the globe. With its commitment to delivering world-class medical care, fostering innovative research, and nurturing future leaders, AKU is dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals and societies in some of the world's most underserved regions. Through its far-reaching initiatives and unwavering dedication, AKU remains a shining example of the power of education and healthcare to break cycles of poverty, inequality, and despair, and to build a brighter future for generations to come.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Cameruddin W. Vellani, a revered figure at the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) in Pakistan, passed away on September 4, 2025, at the age of 88. He was considered a cornerstone of the institution, having joined in 1979 to help establish the Medical College.

Message of Dr Sulaiman Shahbudin, President, AKUHS Karachi, Pakistan on New Year (2026) Eve

Hello everyone.

As we approach the close of 2025, I find myself reflecting on the journey we have travelled together.

I want to begin by saying THANK YOU to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, our generous donors, and our partners. Thank you for your commitment to AKU and for the remarkable resilience you have shown this year. This year reminds us of the fundamental truth. We are strongest when we move with a shared purpose across Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, and beyond. The purpose has never felt more unified. It is the purpose of serving the community that trusts us and building a better future alongside them.

We must acknowledge that this year began with heavy loss of our Chancellor, His Late Highness the Aga Khan IV. We are here today because of his foresight. We are living out what he imagined. Yet his vision lives on in the continuity of leadership through our Chancellor, His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V and our pro-Chancellor, Princess Zehra Aga Khan. Their stewardship provides the steady foundation we need for the decades. That resolve was visible for the world to see in Kampala. It was a historic moment, when earlier this year our Chancellor and pro-Chancellor joined His Excellency President Musevheni and the First Lady to launch a new Campus and to commence the construction of the Aga Khan University Hospital in Kampala. Our goal there is simply ensuring that ambitious young people and skilled professionals do not need to leave their home countries to practice at the highest level.

This year our academic family grew over 800 students graduated and we launched critical new programs across East Africa and Pakistan. Through our online lead program, we expanded access to high quality continuing education for learners in remote and restricted area settings. We also brought international standards closure to home with our Centre for innovation in the medical education in Pakistan becoming an acquitted site for the UK's Royal College of Physicians Clinical Assessment.

AKUHS unveils a new Diagnosis facility.

In research we attracted over USD 64 million in plans. But numbers only tell half the story with the true impact. From the Malaria Free initiative in Thatta, Pakistan to Education Policy Reforms in Nairobi, Kenya and the launch of clinical guidelines that will protect millions of patients. Your work is moving directly from the page to the people who need it most. Innovation is driving this from a data innovation officer Afya Gemma AI tool being recognized by Google to our story tellers bringing the reality of climate change to the world stage. As the Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi positioned itself as a regional leader and a key Government partner and the Hospital in Karachi completed a fortieth year of service, you remained our backbone.

You are building what we call a learning health-care system, where every patient interacts, informs better research and better returns as better care. To our faculty and staff you are the breathing heart of the University. Looking ahead, our path is clear. Under our strategic plan AI onwards we are evolving. We are looking forward to expanding our academic offerings, expand our healthcare foot points and transform into a fully digitized University. We are also aggressively pursuing our goal of net zero emissions, leading the way in climate stewardship.

I also want to recognize the leadership of a distinguished Board of Trustees. They provide us valuable guidance every step of the way. We move forward with commitment to deepen quality, increase access and serve with compassion.

Aga Khan IV inaugurated state of art Cancer Treatment Center.

Aga Khan IV inaugurated state of art Cancer Treatment Center.

The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) – London

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Introduction

Founded in 1977 by His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, The Institute of Ismaili Studies is now housed in the Aga Khan Centre in King's Cross, London, an architectural landmark designed to foster scholarship, dialogue, and cultural exchange.

What began as an initiative to nurture and study the intellectual heritage of Ismaili Muslim communities has evolved into a global centre of research, learning, and intercultural engagement, connecting historical traditions with contemporary scholarship across Muslim contexts.

Mission and Vision

IIS continues to advance its founding mandate: to promote scholarship on Muslim cultures and societies, historical and contemporary, with a particular focus on the Ismaili tradition. This work is anchored in three interconnected domains:

- World-class research that expands understanding of Ismaili, Shi'i, and broader Muslim intellectual traditions.
- Postgraduate education and professional development initiatives, including for those serving as educators in the Ismaili communi-

ty, helping them engage thoughtfully with history, traditions, and contemporary issues.

- Public engagement and knowledge dissemination, making scholarship accessible to global audiences through publications, digital platforms, exhibitions, and outreach.

Organisational Structure

The Institute operates through a coordinated academic and educational structure that integrates research, graduate teaching, and community-oriented education.

Department of Academic Research (DAR)

This department focuses on research programmes that contribute original scholarship in Ismaili history and thought, Qur'anic studies, Shi'i studies, Central and South Asian studies and broader Muslim intellectual traditions. It comprises a number of research units, including:

- Central Asian Studies Unit
- Constituency Studies Unit
- Ismaili Heritage Unit
- Qur'anic Studies Unit
- Shi'i Studies Unit
- South Asian Studies Unit

The output of their research contributes to IIS' publications portfolio, including critical editions, monographs, translations, and accessible works for wider audiences. The units also host seminars, international conferences, and collaborative projects, and supervise PhD students working through partner universities.

Department of Education (DoE)

This department oversees two postgraduate programmes, the development of curricular materials, as well as other educational initiatives, including short courses, bespoke programmes for community institutions, and continuing professional development for religious education teachers, many delivered through blended and digital formats.

Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH)

A two-year programme offering rigorous interdisciplinary training in Islamic studies, humanities, and social sciences, leading to an MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities, validated by the School of Oriental and African Studies. Many students who graduate from this programme proceed to doctoral studies at universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, SOAS, or UCL. Ismaili students from across the world are supported to join this programme through generous scholarships.

Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP)

Delivered through a pioneering collaboration between the Institute of Education, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society, SOAS University of London and The Institute of Ismaili Studies, this two-year programme prepares teachers for the global Ismaili community's secondary religious education programme. Graduates receive a Master of Arts (MA) in Muslim Societies and Civilisations from SOAS, University of London, and a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Teaching and Reflective Practice from UCL.

Ismaili Special Collections Unit (ISCU)

The ISCU curates and preserves one of the world's richest collections of Ismaili manuscripts, rare books, coins, photographs, and audio-visual materials related to the Ismailis. At present, their collection includes nearly 3,000 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Indic and other languages, as well as coins, glass weights, medals and other historical artefacts, photographs and audio-visual materials, rare and special printed materials (including periodicals and magazines) and archival collections, among others.

Their recent initiatives include enhanced digital access to manuscripts and archival collections, public exhibitions at the Aga Khan Centre, podcasts, videos, and outreach events bringing heritage to global audiences.

Other Offices and Units

Beyond the departments and units mentioned above, the IIS is served by a number of other offices, including the Office of Operations (overseeing finance, administration, HR and IT), Office of Academic and Student Affairs, Office of Communications & Development, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit, and the Teaching and Learning Centre. All of the departments, units, and offices are overseen by the Director, Professor Zayn Kassam, through her office.

Aga Khan Library

The IIS Library, now integrated into the Aga Khan Library, London, offers one of the most comprehensive collections globally for the study of Ismaili and wider Shi'i traditions. Its holdings include thousands of manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Indic, and Central Asian languages, rare donated collections, including the Zahid Ali Collection, digitised manuscripts available to researchers through curated online access, and specialist reference collections supporting both IIS faculty and external scholars. The library is a key resource for researchers studying Islamic intellectual history, esotericism, philosophy, and the diverse cultural expressions of Muslim societies.

Publications: Disseminating Knowledge Globally

The IIS Publications Programme remains a cornerstone of the Institute's mission, issuing works across multiple series:

- Encylopaedia Islamica Series
- Epistles of the Brethren of Purity Series
- Ismaili Texts and Translations Series
- Living Ismaili Traditions Series
- Muslim Heritage Series
- Qur'anic Studies Series
- Shi'i Heritage Series
- World of Islam Series

Recent publications reflect deepened engagement with manuscript traditions, critical editions, and interdisciplinary approaches as well as publications for general audiences. Distribution now operates through international academic publishers and digital platforms, expanding global reach.

Location and Facilities

IIS is located in the Aga Khan Centre in London's King's Cross, an architectural landmark designed by Maki & Associates to serve as a hub for scholarship, learning, and cultural exchange. The

building houses hybrid lecture theatres, seminar rooms, and dedicated spaces for The Institute's teaching and research activities, alongside climate-controlled repositories that safeguard manuscripts and archival collections. It shares the Aga Khan Library with the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations. The Centre also includes an exhibition gallery and a series of landscaped roof gardens and terraces inspired by Islamic design traditions, offering a contemplative complement to its academic functions. Situated within one of London's most dynamic knowledge districts, The Institute benefits from close proximity to major universities, cultural institutions, and transport links, enabling rich collaboration and global accessibility.

Impact and Outreach

Over nearly five decades, IIS has:

- trained hundreds of scholars, educators, and community professionals many of whom are now serving across the Ismaili community and in leading universities worldwide
- produced hundreds of publications that have shaped modern scholarship on Shia and Ismaili intellectual history
- expanded digital access to heritage through open-access catalogues, online lectures, and podcasts
- launched exhibitions and public programmes attracting diverse global audiences

The Institute's work strengthens the intellectual foundations of the global Ismaili community while contributing to the wider fields of Islamic and religious studies.

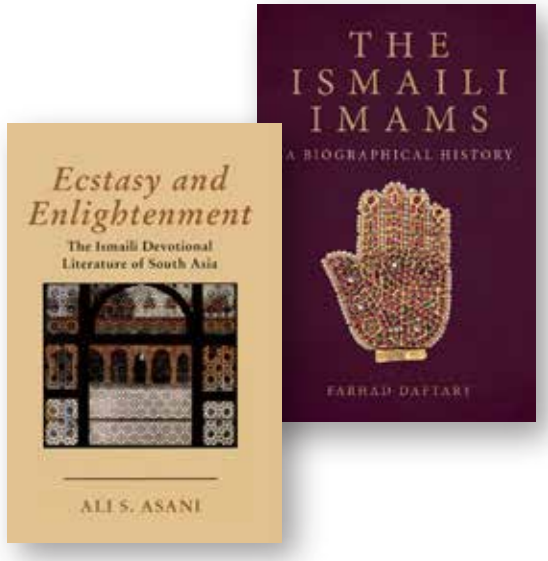
Looking Ahead:

Strategic Priorities (2024–2029)

The current Strategic Plan outlines several priorities that shape the Institute's next decade:

- Advancing Academic Excellence – investing in research, publications, doctoral supervision, and international collaborations.
- Enhancing Student Experience and Global Access – strengthening GPISH and STEP; expanding digital learning pathways; improving student support.
- Preserving and Sharing Heritage – expanding digitisation; improving access to manuscripts and archives; supporting exhibitions and public engagement.
- Community-Centred Education and Capacity Building – developing new curricula; professionalising teacher development; enhancing resources for Ismaili religious education worldwide.
- Organisational Capability and Global Reach – building partnerships, improving operational systems, and reinforcing the Institute's long-term sustainability.

With the continued guidance of His Highness the Aga Khan and support from the global Ismaili community, The Institute is poised to remain an anchor of scholarship, cultural preservation, and educational innovation for generations to come.



Images of two publications of IIS London

Aga Khan Trust for Culture:

AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is a philanthropic foundation established by His Highness the Aga Khan IV in 1988. AKTC is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of institutions working to improve living conditions and opportunities in some of the world's most challenged regions.

AKTC's mission is to promote the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage, support the development of creative expression, and foster a deeper understanding of cultural diversity.

AKTC has been working in various countries, including Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Syria, and Tajikistan, to preserve historic monuments, promote cultural exchange, and support artistic expression.

Programs and Initiatives:

AKTC's programs and initiatives include:

- **Cultural Heritage Conservation:** AKTC has restored numerous historic monuments, including:
- The Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, and the Humayun's Tomb in Delhi, India.
- **Arts and Culture:** AKTC supports artistic expression through programs such as the Aga Khan Music Initiative, which promotes traditional music and cultural exchange-

Urban Revitalization:

- AKTC works to revitalize historic urban areas, promoting economic development and community engagement
- **Education and Research:** AKTC supports education and research initiatives, including the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Impact and Legacy:

AKTC's work has had a significant impact on the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of artistic expression in Muslim societies. Some notable achievements include:

- **Restoration of Historic Monuments:** AKTC has restored over 350 historic monuments, including mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums.
- **Promotion of Cultural Diversity:** AKTC has promoted cultural exchange and understanding through programs such as the Aga Khan Music Initiative, which has reached over 1 million people worldwide.
- **Community Engagement:** AKTC's urban revitalization programs have engaged local communities, promoting economic development and social cohesion.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA)

Aga Khan Award for Architecture

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) is the world's most prestigious recognition of contemporary building and design that furthers the goals of social, economic, and environmental sustainability in the Muslim world and beyond. Established in 1977 by His Highness the Aga Khan IV, the Award is administered by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) and presented every three years. It honors projects that demonstrate excellence in architecture while also addressing the cultural, social, and ecological contexts of their locations.

The Award is not a competition in the traditional sense; rather, it is a curated selection that brings together architects, planners, scholars, and community members to identify projects that set new benchmarks for design that is both beautiful and socially responsible.

A Vision of "Architecture for Humanity"

The Aga Khan's own words describe the Award as "a catalyst for the creation of a built environment that reflects the aspirations of Muslim societies while respecting the planet."

Global Reach, Local Roots:

Although the Award focuses on the Muslim world, many laureates have had a ripple effect far beyond their immediate sites, influencing design practice in Europe, the Americas, and Asia.

A Platform for Innovation:

The Award has highlighted pioneering approaches such as earth-bag construction, low-energy passive design, and community-led urban renewal, inspiring a new generation of architects to think beyond the conventional "starchitect" model.

How the Award Works

1. Nomination – Open calls are issued to architects, institutions, and the public. Nominations are accepted from anywhere in the world, provided the project is located in a country with a Muslim majority or a significant Muslim community.

2. Preliminary Review – A panel of experts (the "Jury") evaluates submissions based on criteria such as architectural excellence, social impact, environmental sustainability, and cultural sensitivity.

3. Shortlist & Site Visits – A shortlist of 10–15 projects is announced. Jury members conduct on-site visits to verify the claims made in the nominations and to engage with the communities that use the buildings.

4. Final Selection – After the visits, the Jury convenes to decide the laureates. Up to five projects may be selected in a cycle, each receiving a monetary prize (currently US $500,000 total, split among the winners) and a medal.

5. Dissemination – The Award's publications, exhibitions, and the biennial "Aga Khan Award for Architecture Conference" ensure that the winning projects are widely documented and discussed.

Key Themes Over the Decades

Themes Example Laureates:

1980s: Revitalising historic urban cores, traditional building techniques Alhambra, Spain (Restoration) – Highlighted the value of preserving heritage.

1990s: Sustainable design, low-tech solutions Masaq, Iran – "The Windcatcher" – Showcased passive cooling.

2000s Community-led housing, urban renewal Bamako, Mali – "Maison des Jeunes" – Demonstrated participatory design.

2010s: Climate-responsive architecture, resilient infrastructure MaaS – "The Green Roof" in Nairobi – Integrated vegetation for storm-water management.
2020s: Digital fabrication, circular economy Kuwait – "The Zero-Waste Pavilion" – Built from reclaimed shipping containers.

These themes reflect an evolving understanding of what "good architecture" means in the context of rapid urbanisation, climate change, and cultural identity.

Impact on Design Practice

- Education – The Award's extensive documentation (books, PDFs, and the online "Aga Khan Architecture Archive") is used in architecture schools worldwide as case studies of sustainable, context-sensitive design.
- Policy Influence – Several laureates have informed national building codes, especially in the areas of energy efficiency and heritage conservation.
- Professional Recognition – Winning or being shortlisted often catapults architects onto the global stage, leading to new commissions and research opportunities.

Some Iconic Laureates:

The Great Mosque of Djenné (Mali, 1995) Recognised for its extraordinary community-managed maintenance and the embodiment of vernacular mud-brick architecture.

The National Library of Kosovo (Prishtina, 2004) – Celebrated for its modernist reinterpretation of traditional Balkan motifs, creating a civic landmark in a post-conflict society.

The "Bamboo House" in Bali (Indonesia, 2014) – A showcase of rapid-renewable material use and low-energy design, inspiring similar projects across Southeast Asia.

The "Museum of Islamic Art" in Doha (Qatar, 2019) – Praised for its elegant geometry and its role in cultural tourism, while employing water-saving landscaping.

Each of these projects tells a story of how architecture can serve both people and place. It vouchsafe Aga Khan's belief that "architecure is a mean to improve the quality of life for all

Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FHA)

Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FHA) is the emergency-response arm of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) founded by H H Prince Karim Aga Khan in 1992. FHA translates the Aga Khan's vision of "helping people help themselves" into rapid, dignified relief and long-term recovery for the world's most vulnerable communities. Although it operates under the umbrella of the Aga Khan Foundation, FHA's mandate is distinct: it intervenes in sudden-onset disasters (earthquakes, floods, conflict) and in chronic crises (food insecurity, displacement) while always preparing for the next shock.

FHA works in 18 countries across South Asia, East Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, reaching roughly 2 million people each year. Its staff of about 300 professionals (many of them local) blend technical expertise with deep cultural knowledge, ensuring that aid is both effective and respectful.

Core Principles:

Principle What it means on the ground:

Do-No-Harm Every intervention is screened to avoid exacerbating tensions or damaging the environment.

Community-Led Response Affected populations co-design the assistance; women's groups, youth committees and local NGOs are partners from day 1.

Preparedness & Resilience FHA runs early-warning drills, builds stockpiles of shelter kits and trains volunteers so that communities can bounce back faster.

Integrated Programming Relief is linked to longer-term development (e.g., cash-for-work programmes that also restore irrigation channels).

Transparency & Accountability Real-time monitoring through mobile data platforms and third-party audits keep donors informed and beneficiaries empowered.

These principles have earned FHA the "Gold Standard" label from the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative for three consecutive cycles.

Flagship Operations:

(Recent Highlights)

Year Crisis FHA's Signature Action Impact:

Key Program Areas:

1. Emergency Shelter & Non-Food Items – Rapid-deployment shelters, tarpaulins and winter kits that meet Sphere standards.

2. Food Security & Livelihoods – Cash-vouchers, seed distributions and livestock restocking that rebuild household assets.

3. Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) – Portable water-purification units, latrine construction and hygiene-education campaigns.

4. Health & Nutrition – Mobile clinics, vaccination drives and malnutrition- screening in refugee camps.

5. Protection & Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Services – Safe spaces, legal counselling and community-based referral pathways.

Each area follows a *"relief → recovery → development" continuum, ensuring that the emergency does not become a permanent state.

2022 Pakistan monsoon floods (Sindh & Punjab) Distributed 45,000 shelter kits and 120,000 hygiene parcels; set up 30 temporary schools. 300,000 people received safe shelter; 85 % of children re-enrolled in school within three months.

2023 Syrian refugee influx in Jordan Established "Cash-for-Work" programmes that repaired water pipelines in host villages. 12,000 refugees earned cash; host-community water supply improved by 40 %.

2024 Earthquake in Ghor, Afghanistan Deployed 10 mobile health units, vaccinated 70,000 children against measles. Mortality rates in the hardest-hit districts fell by 30 % compared with pre-earthquake levels.

2025 Atabad Lake disaster, Gilgit-Baltistan Coordinated a multi-agency rescue, provided 5,000 winterized tents, and built a 2 km access road to the lake's edge for safe evacuation. 8,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) received shelter before the winter freeze; the new road now serves 12 villages for trade and health outreach.

The Atabad Lake case is especially noteworthy because it illustrates FHA's ability to combine rapid rescue with infrastructure that endures beyond the emergency.

5. The Atabad Lake Project – Why It Matters

In January 2025, a massive landslide created the 27-km-long Atabad Lake in the Hunza Valley, submerging several villages and blocking the Karakoram Highway. The sudden appearance of a lake in a high-altitude, seismically active region triggered a humanitarian crisis:

- Displacement – ~8,000 people lost homes.
- Transportation – The highway, a lifeline for food and medicine, was cut off.
- Winter risk – Freezing temperatures threatened those still on the lake's shores.

FHA's response combined immediate relief (air-dropped food, emergency medical teams) with infrastructure (a 2 km gravel road to the lake's edge, enabling safe evacuation and later, a ferry service). The road also opened a trade route for local farmers, turning a disaster-response project into a long-term Úconnectivity asset.

"When the lake rose, we didn't just hand out tents; we built a road that will keep these villages linked for generations." – Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman, AKRSP (personal communication, 2025)

6. mpact in Numbers (2023-2024)

- million people reached annually across 18 countries.
- 98 % of cash-voucher recipients reported using the funds to purchase locally-sourced food, boosting market activity.
- 3 million litres of safe water provided through portable treatment units.
- 45,000 shelter kits distributed in the Pakistan floods alone.
- 12 % reduction in acute malnutrition rates in the Afghan earthquake-affected districts after six months of FHA health interventions.

These figures reflect a model where aid is a catalyst, not a permanent crutch.

7. Partnerships & Funding

FHA blends core contributions from the Aga Khan's endowment with project-specific grants from:

- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
- European Union Humanitarian Aid (ECHO)
- USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)
- Private donors (including the Ismaili community's "Sukuk for Relief" programme)

All funding is channelled through a transparent financial system that publishes quarterly reports on the AKDN website.

THE SPIRIT, PLANNING AND TIMELY EXECUTION OF PLAN TO RESOLVE THE ATABAD LAKE ISSUE PROVIDES A BEACON OF LIGHT TO DRIVE FUTURE CLIMATE-ADAPTATION PROJECTS ACROSS AKDN NETWORK.

27-km-long Atabad Lake in the Hunza Valley

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PAKISTAN

IED was the brainchild of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV and materialized after years of hard work by the Education Task Force, formed in late 1988.

"The ripple effect that a teacher can have as he or she touches the lives of hundreds of students over the years provides a multiplier that even the sharpest businessman would envy." (His Highness the Aga Khan, Inauguration of the Professional Development Centre in Northern areas, October 19, 2000)

Education remains both a significant challenge and the most important source of hope for Pakistan. With a literacy rate of 62%, 26 million children out of school, and wide discrepancies in access and quality, Pakistan has little to be proud of and much to concern about in the sphere of education. Yet, such is the role of education in the fate of a society that these dismal numbers call for more and not less commitment to the field.

The Impact and Future Role of AKU-IED?

Established in 1993 as the Aga Khan University's first venture outside the field of health, AKU-IED stands for quality education for all, particularly through empowering teachers and strengthening educational leadership.

Guided by the words of the University's First Chancellor that "the work of the Institute is designed to raise the competence of teachers, both in their substantive areas of specialty and in their teaching skills," a key consideration for us is the aspiration to act as a trailblazer and standard bearer of quality.

Over the course of its 33-year existence, AKU-IED has worked with more than 12,000 schools and has developed over 60,000 teachers, teacher educators, and administrators from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Syria, Tajikistan, and East Africa. Through these teachers, we estimate that we have reached over 20 million students.

Educational Philosophy

Underpinning our work mission is our educational philosophy, which champions teacher education over training.

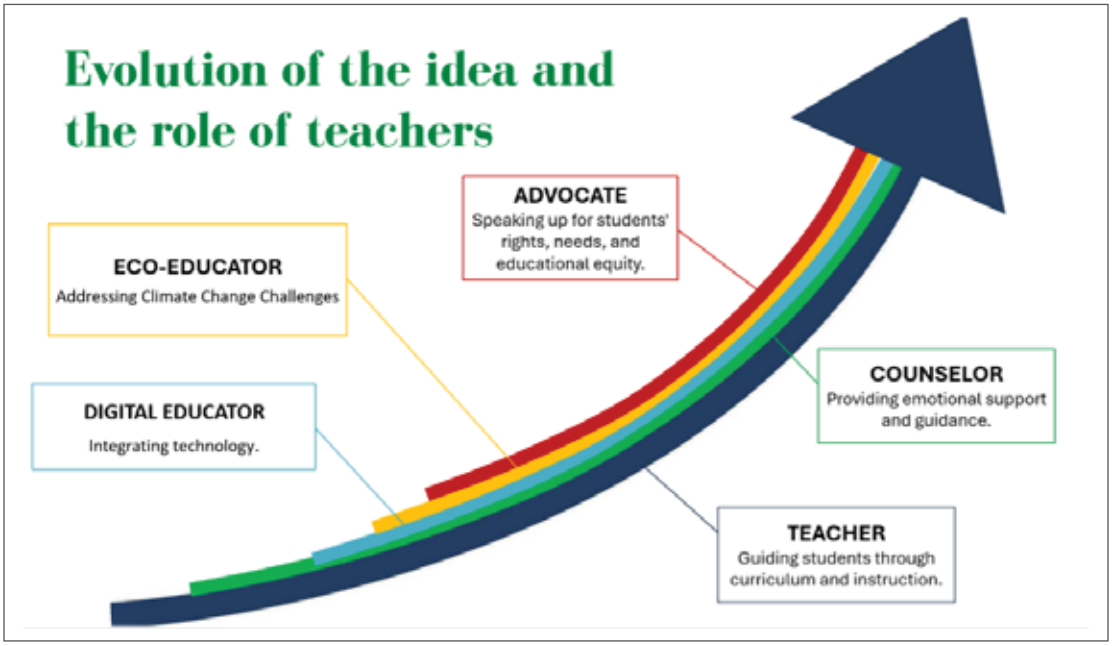
Our programmes aim to integrate:
- strong subject knowledge;
- critical curiosity;
- diverse pedagogies; and
- a commitment to inclusivity and sustainability.

Our vision is to contribute to the creation of an elite of labour, not of leisure.

What Do We Do?

Our work is divided into five key areas, as illustrated in this figure

Changing profile of teachers over the existence of AKU-IED



His Highness the Aga Khan, Opening Ceremony of Institute for Educational Development, Pakistan, Nov. 18, 1994

Educational Programmes

Almost 90% of our graduates stay in Pakistan or other developing economies from which they join our courses, contributing as teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, and in a variety of other roles. Of these, 40% serve in Pakistan's rural areas and small towns.

Our Degree and CPD Courses

BEd 1.5 years	Teacher preparation: for those new to teaching or intending to move into teaching
A master's degree with various specialisations	In-service teacher development: for experienced teachers and other educationists intending to improve teaching or take other education careers
Doctoral programme	Research and publication programme: for those seeking to make a research based career
Continuous Professional Development courses	In-service educational development for a variety of professionals

Short Courses Delivered in 2025

35+	1600+	1200+
CPEs and customized trainings held	Participants benefitted	Training hours

The Candlelight Effect of our graduates: Our students serve in classrooms as well as leadership positions in various schools, universities, NGOs, and public services.

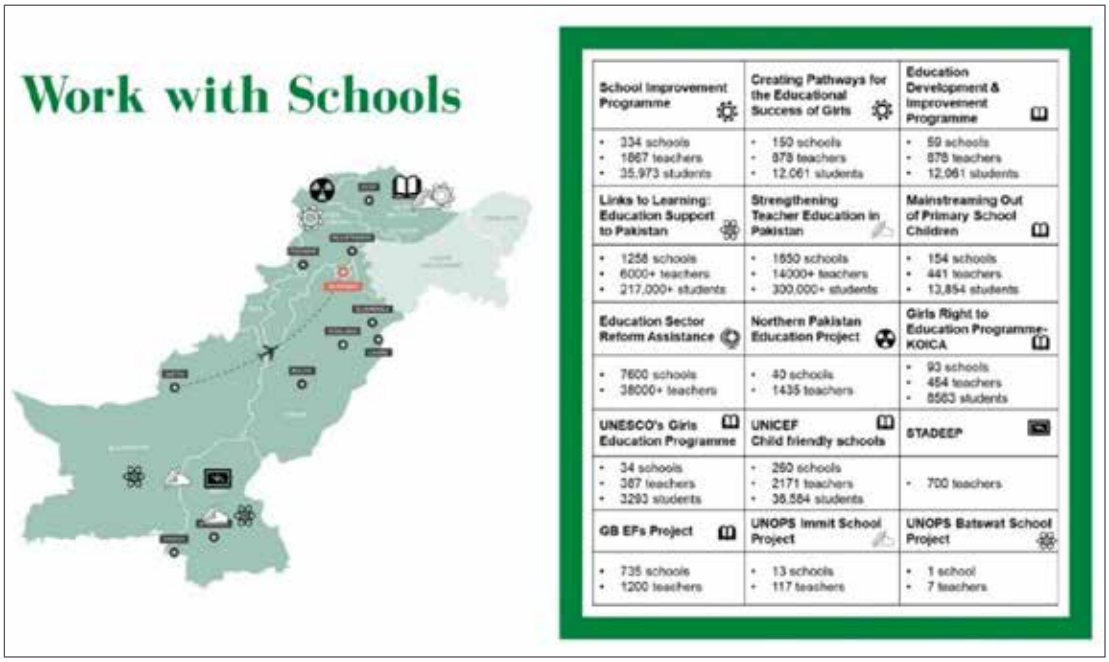
Alongside this, several of our alumni have taken the entrepreneurial route and established their own institutions. We call this the candlelight impact, where one candle, the AKU-IED, leads to more candles.

Research and Knowledge Dissemination

Research at AKU-IED is underpinned by a twin passion for understanding and improving educational practices and policies in Pakistan and beyond. It is part of the very fabric of the Institute's approach to teaching and learning. Our faculty and student research profiles ranges from classroom-focused action research to large-scale nationwide studies. In line with the broader university orientation towards equity and access, our research has a strong emphasis on marginalized and underprivileged communities. AKU-IED also serves as a platform for comprehensive research dialogue and public engagement on pressing educational challenges.

School Improvement Programmes

A hallmark of our work is that our faculty and students learn both in the classroom and in the community. We work directly with schools and communities to build capacity and enhance the quality of leadership and pedagogy. This helps us to integrate theory and practice, test new ideas, and scale up successful innovations.



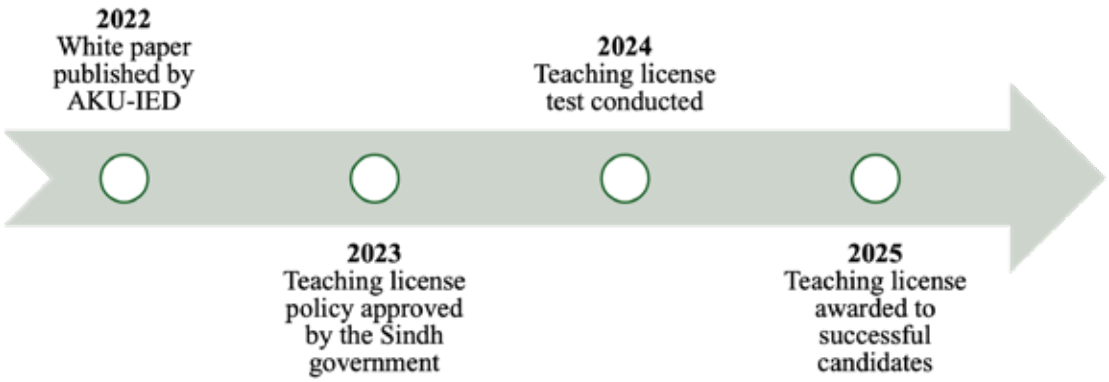
School Improvement Programme	Creating Pathways for the Educational Success of Girls	Education Development & Improvement Programme
• 334 schools • 1867 teachers • 35,973 students	• 150 schools • 878 teachers • 12,061 students	• 59 schools • 878 teachers • 12,061 students
Links to Learning: Education Support to Pakistan	**Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan**	**Mainstreaming Out of Primary School Children**
• 1258 schools • 6000+ teachers • 217,000+ students	• 1650 schools • 14000+ teachers • 300,000+ students	• 154 schools • 441 teachers • 13,854 students
Education Sector Reform Assistance	**Northern Pakistan Education Project**	**Girls Right to Education Programme- KOICA**
• 7600 schools • 38000+ teachers	• 40 schools • 1435 teachers	• 93 schools • 464 teachers • 8563 students
UNESCO's Girls Education Programme	**UNICEF Child friendly schools**	**STADEEP**
• 34 schools • 387 teachers • 3293 students	• 260 schools • 2171 teachers • 36,584 students	• 700 teachers
GB EFs Project	**UNOPS Immit School Project**	**UNOPS Batswat School Project**
• 735 schools • 1200 teachers	• 13 schools • 117 teachers	• 1 school • 7 teachers

This work is deliveredmainly through our three Professional Development Centres in Karachi, Gilgit, and Chitral.

Karachi Gilgit Chitral

Advocacy for Education

The AKU-IED acts as an active and responsible civil society organization and advocates quality education for all. This involves our participation in think tanks, policy dialogues, and dedicated advocacy for policy development. Our most recent work has been in the area of teaching licensing where, along with our partner organizations, we successfully advocated for the introduction of the first-ever teaching license in Pakistan.



Our Faculty and Staff

All our work is made possible by our dedicated faculty and staff. Our faculty, a distinguished collective of scholar-practitioners who have earned their degrees from globally renowned universities, aren't just teachers and researchers; they are sought-after architects of change. Our staff members often come from other highly reputed organisations, bringing a wealth of experience. Many of our staff have been with us for decades, demonstrating loyalty and providing inspiration and guidance to the junior members.

Recent Public Recognition of Our Staff and Work

Dr Moladad Shafa
Awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz in recognition of his dedicated efforts in advancing education

Aniqa Bano
Presidential Pride of Performance Award for Education and Public Service in Baltistan

Abdul Jahan
Appointed as the caretaker Minister of Education and Public Works twice

Professor Farid Panjwani
Appointed as a member of the 19-member National Education Task Force by the Prime Minister of Pakistan

Short and Long-term Plans

As we continue to make a difference, two areas in particular will receive attention: Special Needs Education and Environmental Education. Both of these are high priorities for the country and will have a deep and lasting impact at the individual and collective levels.

The brief history and achievements of AKU-IED speak volumes about the foresightedness and love for education of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV.

The Institute for Educational Development (IED) targets a very important, low status profession: teaching. The very creation of IED highlights the importance of teaching, and the programmes of IED are crafted to amplify that message. The technical work of the Institute is designed to raise the competence of teachers, both in their substantive areas of specialty and in their teaching skills, with the expectation that a truly excellent teacher can inspire others by example. Greater competence may not ensure higher status, but it will make it easier to achieve. Neither publicity nor good training is likely to make much difference, however, unless an environment is created in which good teachers can be more effective. IED is planning to devote much of its work to creating such an environment. By working with school heads, not just individual teachers, IED will try to build a new teaching environment. The leadership of school heads is essential to real reform.

Extract from the speech of Aga Khan IV at the time of inauguration of AKU-IED.

The Aga Khan University Examination Board: Building a National Model for Educational Excellence

آغا خان یونیورسٹی ایگزامینیشن بورڈ
AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD

Vision Inspired by the Founding Chancellor

The Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB) was established by the Aga Khan University as Pakistan's first national examination board led by a private, international institution. Its creation was guided by a commitment to move beyond rote learning and to promote assessment that values critical thinking, ethical conduct, and equitable access to quality education. Inspired by the vision of the Founding Chancellor, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, the Board was mandated to serve as a model of educational excellence for Pakistan and the developing world, supporting the government in strengthening its education system and establishing a benchmark for valid, fair, transparent, and reliable assessment.

AKU-EB was created to serve as a catalyst for educational reform in Pakistan by introducing modern assessment methodologies aligned with national standards while incorporating global best practices. From its inception, the Board was designed not merely as an examining authority but as an institution that influences teaching, learning, and curriculum development across the country.

A Legacy of Vision and Service

The Board embodies the Founding Chancellor's vision and, under the guidance of the Chancellor and Pro Chancellor, ensures that education nurtures intellectual curiosity, moral responsibility, and pluralistic values while contributing to national development.

The vision of AKU-EB is to be a model of excellence and innovation in education for Pakistan and the developing world.

The mission of the institution is to:

1. increase access to quality education for lower and middle-income students at a secondary and higher secondary school level
2. inculcate a culture of higher-order thinking in the youth through indigenous educational development and assessment programmes
3. acquire new knowledge through research and share best practices in education

The AKU-EB embodies the university's core values of impact, quality, relevance, and access across all its functions and services.

AKU-EB's journey demonstrates how visionary leadership can inspire institutional transformation and societal progress. By promoting quality, access, relevance, and impact in education, the Board continues to empower generations of learners and strengthen Pakistan's educational future.

Strengthening National Educational Standards

AKU-EB operates as a national examination board affiliated with the Inter Board Coordination Commission (IBCC), ensuring alignment with national educational policies and curriculum frameworks.

Through its Secondary and Higher Secondary School Certificates, the Board raises academic standards by emphasising conceptual understanding, problem-solving, and student-centred learning. Through rigorous, high-quality assessments, AKU-EB upholds fairness, reliability, and integrity while influencing teaching and learning across Pakistan.

In addition to its Secondary and Higher Secondary School Certificates, AKU-EB expands access to quality education across urban, rural, and remote regions, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. Through its Primary and Middle School Programmes, the Board introduces project-based, inquiry-driven learning that strengthens literacy, numeracy, creativity, and critical thinking, helping reduce disparities and prepare students for higher education and lifelong learning.

Measurable Student Success and University Destination Outcomes

One of the strongest indicators of AKU-EB's impact is the success of its graduates. The University Destination Survey, conducted annually with a 95% response rate, shows that over 92% of AKU-EB graduates gain admission to universities, with many progressing to more than 200 institutions worldwide. These include leading medical, engineering, business, and liberal arts institutions, with graduates pursuing a wide range of academic and professional disciplines.

AKU-EB students have demonstrated notable success in competitive entrance examinations, including national medical and engineering entry tests. Their strong conceptual grounding, analytical ability, and problem-solving skills provide a distinct advantage in high-stakes competitive environments.

Feedback from higher education institutions consistently highlights AKU-EB graduates as confident learners, independent thinkers, and ethically responsible individuals capable of adapting to diverse academic settings.

Building Teacher Capacity and Strengthening Schools

AKU-EB's impact extends beyond student assessment to professional development and institutional strengthening. The Board regularly conducts training workshops, webinars, curriculum alignment sessions, and capacity-building programmes for teachers and school leaders.

These initiatives focus on:

- Modern pedagogical practices
- Assessment literacy and item development
- Curriculum implementation strategies
- Classroom-based assessment integration

By supporting teacher development, AKU-EB contributes to long-term systemic improvement in teaching and learning quality.

Transformational Impact of Donor Partnerships

Philanthropic partnerships have played a vital role in expanding AKU-EB's outreach and advancing educational equity. Through donor-funded scholarship programmes, students from financially constrained backgrounds across the country have gained access to quality education. These initiatives include multi-year scholarships, technology support, and regional education programmes in underserved areas such as Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. Such partnerships demonstrate how collaboration between AKU-EB and philanthropic donors creates sustainable educational opportunities and nurtures future leaders.

Advancing National Educational Reform and Policy Dialogue

AKU-EB contributes to strengthening Pakistan's education system by actively supporting national policy dialogue on assessment quality, curriculum alignment, and student learning standards. Through research, technical collaboration, and engagement with national and provincial education stakeholders, the Board promotes evidence-based assessment practices and professional capacity development within the broader educational ecosystem.

By sharing its expertise in modern assessment methodologies, AKU-EB supports national efforts to enhance examination credibility, improve learning outcomes, and advance educational reforms that respond to evolving societal and workforce needs.

Digital Innovation and Future Readiness

Responding to evolving global educational trends, AKU-EB is advancing digital transformation initiatives designed to enhance operational efficiency and assessment innovation. Emerging initiatives include AI-supported item banking, e-marking expansion, computer-based testing, and data-driven academic performance analytics.

These initiatives aim to provide students with flexible, secure, and technologically advanced assessment experiences while ensuring scalability and sustainability for future educational needs.

Way Forward

As AKU-EB looks toward the future, it remains committed to advancing educational excellence through the responsible use of technology, data-driven assessment systems, and alignment with international best practices. By strengthening digital innovation and flexible assessment models, the Board seeks to expand access to quality education for all learners across Pakistan, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and communities where educational infrastructure remains limited. In doing so, AKU-EB continues to translate the Founding Chancellor's vision into sustainable educational progress, contributing to human development, social cohesion, and national advancement.

Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan: A Story of Evolution

Aga Khan Education Services

Reaching some of the remotest regions of the country, Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES, Pakistan) has been providing quality education for over 120 years. The journey began in 1905 with the establishment of the first school in Gwadar, Baluchistan.

Today, AKES, Pakistan operates 156 schools and six hostels across Pakistan, predominantly in rural and underserved areas, serving nearly 62,000 students. The portfolio reflects remarkable diversity, across geography, socio-economic contexts, and cultural settings. Schools range from small rural units with fewer than 20 students to large urban campuses enrolling over 7,000 learners. Operations have been divided into three regions namely, Gilgit Baltistan - 103 schools, three hostels, 31,000 students; Chitral - 45 schools, three hostels, 15,000 students and South - 8 schools, 15,500 students.

As part of the Aga Khan Development Network, AKES, Pakistan's overarching purpose is to improve quality of life through education, generation after generation.

Mission

"To enable many generations of students to acquire both knowledge and the essential spiritual wisdom needed to balance that knowledge and enable their lives to attain the highest fulfilment."

The key features shaping the distinct position of AKES, Pakistan in the overall educational landscape of Pakistan include its special attention to the marginalized communities residing in the underprivileged areas, emphasis on female education and women empowerment, innovative and contextually relevant pedagogies, integration of technology into education, a conscious effort to keep the school portfolio agile and relevant to the contemporary context, investment in teacher development, and empowerment of communities to enable them initiate and sustain educational interventions.

From Central Education Board to AKES, Pakistan: Institutional Development

Originally established as the Central Education Board (CEB) in 1905, the institution expanded steadily over subsequent decades. Six additional schools were established in Sindh, including Karachi (Karimabad, Garden, Kharadar), Hyderabad, Sultanabad, and Mirpur Sakro.

Aga Khan School Kharadar (Alexandria Building) - Celebrating its 100 years in 2026

In 1945, during his Diamond Jubilee, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III dedicated jubilee funds to social development initiatives across Africa and Asia. One of the most transformative outcomes was the establishment of Diamond Jubilee (DJ) Schools in northern Pakistan, at a time when formal education was scarce and largely inaccessible to girls.

Responding to community demand, primary schools were established across Hunza, Gojal, Punyal, Ishkoman, Gupis, and Yasin by the mid-1950s. These schools were fully supported through institutional resources, and education was provided free of cost.

This expansion was enabled through strong

community mobilisation, guided by His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. Community leaders, Mirs, and opinion-makers were engaged through dialogue and awareness-building, gradually leading to structured partnerships under the Ismaili Council system in the 1980s. Communities became active partners, contributing land, materials, labour, and financial support, taking ownership of education at the grassroots level.

In Chitral, schools could only be established in the 1980s due to resistance from local rulers. The first Aga Khan School in Chitral opened in early 1980s.

In 1998, CEB was formally reconstituted and registered as Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan.

Aga Khan School Ovirk 1980 and 2025

Establishment of Aga Khan Higher Secondary Schools

In 1983 His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV inaugurated the first Aga Khan School in Sherqilla (Ghizer) as part of his Silver Jubilee. During the same visit to the region, he also laid the foundation stone for another model institution, the Aga Khan Academy Karimabad in Hunza which was later reprofiled as Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Hunza.

Opening Ceremony of Aga Khan Higher Seconday School Sherqilla *Visting Aga Khan Higher Seconday School Hunza*

Over subsequent decades, Higher Secondary Schools were established in Karachi, Gilgit, Gahkuch, Chitral, and Kuragh. These schools later affiliated with the Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB) and produced graduates who gained admission to leading national and international universities and emerged as accomplished professionals and leaders.

Long-Term Strategy (LTS)

In 2006, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV guided AKES, Pakistan to undertake a comprehensive portfolio review to assess the demography of beneficiary population, relevance to 21st-century needs and strategic and operational effectiveness.

Following the guidance, a portfolio review exercise was initiated, and a long-term strategy document was prepared and submitted to His Highness in 2009.

In response to the long-term strategy paper, His Highness provided extensive guidance and feedback in a formal meeting held in France. The following are the key strategic drivers emanating from the guidance:

(i) **Increase access** at all levels and remove financial barriers through financial assistance

(ii) **Provide continuity** of education from pre-primary till higher secondary by adding grades to existing schools; integrating community managed schools; and expanding the portfolio through construction of new schools and hostels

(iii) **Upgrade quality of school portfolio** by transitioning the schools to the **AKU-Examination Board (AKU-EB)**; and improve learning outcomes of students through professional development of teachers, improving classroom practice and providing learning support to students

(iv) **Create a conducive learning environment in schools** by upgrading infrastructure, enhancing use of technology, and providing missing physical facilities and resources

(v) **Improve sustainabilit**y of operations Based on the guidance, a strategic roadmap document containing the above and other strategic drivers with timelines, was submitted to His Highness in 2010; for which principal approval was granted, leading to programmatic interventions during 2011-2023. Based on the strategic roadmap a multiyear school repositioning plan was developed and implemented which included (i) extension of schools and expansion of campuses; (ii) taking over selected community schools; (iii) establishing new schools, and (iv) transforming quality of teaching and learning by enhancing human resource capacity and introducing best practice in classrooms.

Current School Portfolio

AKES, Pakistan has evolved from scattered units into a cohesive school system. Of the 156 schools, 30 offer continuity up to Grade XII and 58 up to Grade X. Smaller schools are converging into hub-and-spoke models. While the number of schools has declined, enrollment has grown significantly, from 35,000 (2015) to around 62,000 (2025).

The following are some of the key features of the current school portfolio:

School Development

School development exercise drives the growth of portfolio quantitatively and qualitatively. Wherever a school transits from a lower profile to an upper profile, a school development plan is prepared which contains the ideal state, current status of school, the gap and measures to fill the gap. Accordingly, multi-year interventions are planned and implemented including screening of teachers, replacement of poor teachers with good teachers, provision of qualified school leadership, construction and improvement in facilities, professional development and provision of resources. The process is intense when a school is shifted from a local board to AKU-EB. To comply with the high academic rigor and standards of AKU-EB the benchmarks are set high and resources are provided accordingly. The key consideration in this regard is a complete understanding of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of AKU-EB and ability to design the learning experiences and assessment practices accordingly. This calls for massive upgrading in teachers' competencies; skills sets and classroom practices. The paradigm shift is from decades old transactional approach

which relied on memorization and reproduction of facts to a more transformational approach which engages each learner in active learning and enquiry.

Professional Development

The Professional Development framework of AKES, Pakistan capitalized on 70-20-10 model where 70% of learning and professional development comes from personal efforts and practice of individual, 20% comes from social interaction and peer support, while 10% is based on formal professional development intervention. The framework provides a beautiful blend of learning experiences to a teacher to enhance his/her professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional dispositions. The professional development journey of a teacher is categorized into three benchmark levels: foundation, progression, and specialization. The foundation level aims at providing a basic pedagogical understanding and enabling a novice teacher to handle a class by equipping him/her with the basic teaching techniques and modes of assessment. The progression level provides a roadmap putting each teacher on a continuum of learning from novice to proficient level, while the specialization level provides each teacher with an opportunity to develop leadership capacity in a particular theme or skill set.

English Language Development

A variety of programs were designed and implemented to improve English language proficiency of teachers and students. The programs included English Language Enhancement Program (ELEP) for teachers and school leaders in collaboration with the Pakistan American Culture Centre (PACC) and Converse for students, teachers, and other staff members. The purpose of these programs was to enable teachers and students communicate in English fluently and accurately.

Physical Facilities

Following the approval of long-term strategy, a comprehensive physical facilities assessment exercise was undertaken where the existing facilities were assessed for structural soundness and seismic safety; and vulnerabilities and risks were identified. The buildings which were identified as structurally not sound or vulnerable to disasters were either retrofitted or dismantled and rebuilt.

These new aesthetically appealing and structurally sound school buildings provide a joyful and conducive learning environment enabling effective teaching and learning.

Entrance of students in top ranking institutions of higher education

A more objective indicator of quality is the admission of graduating students into top ranking universities. Since affiliation with AKU-EB the ratio of admission of graduating students to top raking universities has increased. Over 70% of graduating students (grade XII) get university placement, while above 40% of them get admission into top ranking universities in the country and abroad.

Technology in Education

One of the key features of the current school portfolio is to integrate technology into education. The major interventions include upgrading Technology Infrastructure in schools, providing Internet Connectivity through fiber optics and internet via satellite, establishing Computer Laboratories in schools, implementation of ICT curriculum and relevant apps to make the teaching joyful and impactful installation of In-classroom Technology including computers and display devices and equipping teachers with technological skills. All the educators of technology have obtained certificate of Microsoft Certified Educator while the other educational leaders and lead teachers will do so in due course.

ICT Lab - Diamond Jubilee High School Mohammedabad, Gilgit

ICT Lab – Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Karachi

Early Childhood Development (ECD)

The preprimary program of AKES, Pakistan follows High Scope approach which engages each learner in an independent learning process by providing a freedom of choice to manipulate material organized in a planned manner according to a theme or topic, while an adult present in the classroom provides

overall support and enabling environment and adds language to make the manipulation meaningful for the learner. ECD staff are inducted through a rigorous process. It is mandatory for each newly inducted ECD teacher to attend a foundation course within the first six months of induction. Following this, a series of refresher and need-based training courses are offered to the preprimary staff. The teachers are provided with standardized lesson plans along with Digital Lesson Plans (DLP) to show the best practice. The key features of the academic program include a special focus on literacy and numeracy and synthetic phonics approach where program age-appropriate decodable and non-decodable readers and a wide range of digital and physical resources are provided to the learners. To bridge the transition gap between preprimary and primary grades the preprimary children are offered a bridging program each year at the end of the session where primary and preprimary teachers work together with the students in transition.

Aga Khan School (Pre Primary) Dolumuch

Student Counseling and Support Program

The Student Counseling and Support program of AKES, Pakistan aims to:

1. Provide pastoral care and counselling to students particularly those suffering from setbacks and emotional issues
2. Provide career counselling and guidance to all the students

The portfolio is led by a national coordinator assisted by a team of Career Counsellors and Psychologists along with Student Support Coordinators (SSCs) who are primarily teachers of different subject areas but have been trained to deliver the life skills program and provide basic counselling support to students.

The salient features of the program include the availability of help and support at the reach of students; one-one guidance and support, group counseling, academic career counseling, parental education, and crisis intervention in each secondary school. The program enables the graduates to make informed decisions about their careers based on their dispositions.

School repositioning; a futuristic perspective

The journey doesn't stop here, rather takes a major shift towards a brighter future, where innovation, relevance and leveraging technological advancements will be key features of the school portfolio. In line with the guidance of His Highness the Aga Khan IV, the future school portfolio will be aligned with the demand aiming at maximising the access at each

Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Gahkuch

Diamond Jubilee High School Damas

Aga Khan School Chatorkhand

Aga Khan School Nasirabad

level. Schools serving the larger population in main town settlements will have multiple streams or shifts to meet the overwhelming demand, the small remote schools serving the thinly scattered population, will introduce innovative alternate education models (such as alternate year admissions, and integrated classes) to address the needs in a more efficient manner.

The revised school portfolio will aim at making available a variety of curricular choices at a secondary and higher secondary level, including pre-medical, pre-engineering, computer science, business studies, social sciences and commerce. A special focus on humanities as an integrated strand will be a key feature of every school.

At the heart of the revised school portfolio will be the core academic programs and interventions. These programs stem from an academic framework which outlines the interwoven relationship of the key strands shaping the core program of an AKES, Pakistan school in 21st century. The framework is built on key considerations for desired graduate profile namely employability/entrepreneurship, civic responsibility and excellence, and classifies the core components into two broad categories: academic interventions and programs, and cross cutting themes. The academic programs are further classified into three categories; core-curricular, co-curricular and supplementary/specialization programs, whereas cross cutting themes are classified into ethics and values, care for environment, culture, civilization and traditions, global citizenship, financial literacy, English and ICT.

A carefully defined student profile and competency framework for each grade and subject will inform teaching and learning in schools and provide direction to the professional development programmes. While the student profile and competency framework will be aligned with international standards and informed by contemporary research, at the same time they will remain agile and responsive to the contextual needs.

To align the school program to 21st century and resolve the issues of teaching in remote areas a global ed-tech strategy is underway. The strategy aims to offer solutions to the dearth of qualified teachers in remote schools, need for remedial support after school hours, replicating best practices and needs of professional development of teachers. Through innovative models and approaches the strategy makes access to best practice easy and updated instructional materials and pedagogies available in remote schools. Through multiple interventions including improving connectivity, providing infrastructure and gadgets, offering online lessons and improving teachers' skills the strategy is enabling a paradigm shift in education.

Some future projects in pipeline

Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Garamchashma

Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Alyabad

Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Mastuj

Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Hyderabad

Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Jutial

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan:
A Legacy of Care and Service

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan

A view of the exterior of Aga Khan Hospital, Gilgit.

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS,P) is one of the country's largest not-for-profit healthcare systems, shaped by a century-long commitment to compassion, dignity, and service. Established in 1924 by His Highness Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah, Aga Khan III, the Janbai Maternity Home in Karachi addressed high maternal and child mortality. This modest 42-bed facility laid the foundation for a nationwide health network dedicated to improving quality of life across Pakistan.

Today, AKHS,P extends across Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh, delivering care to some of the most remote, mountainous, and underserved regions in the country.

Anchored in the communities it serves, AKHS,P operates through an integrated hub-and-spoke model that ensures people receive the right care at the right level—beginning with health promotion and disease prevention at the community level and extending across the continuum of care.

From outreach clinics in isolated valleys to comprehensive diagnostic and emergency services at central facilities, this system is strengthened by robust referral pathways, skilled frontline workers, and expanding digital health solutions that bridge distance and terrain. Its services span maternal and newborn care, non-communicable disease management, school and community health programmes, and targeted initiatives in RMNCAH, mental health, women's cancers, and nutrition.

With 114 health facilities—including a hospital, a medical centre, seven Comprehensive Health Centres (three under public–private partnerships), 101 Basic Health Centres, four outreach and diagnostic centres, and 13 Health Promoting Models—AKHS,P works to ensure that geography is never a barrier to well-being. Each year, more than 1.1 million outpatient visits and over 27,000 admissions reflect the trust communities place in its care. In total, AKHS,P reaches more than 880,000 people annually, with donor-supported initiatives extending impact to an additional 628,000 individuals who once faced limited access to essential health services.

As part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), AKHS,P collaborates closely with the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan University to strengthen health systems through shared expertise, research, and capacity building and evidence-based practice.

Vision & Legacy

For more than a century, AKHS,P has worked to improve quality of life by delivering accessible, ethical, and high-quality healthcare to communities across Pakistan—particularly those living in remote and underserved regions. Rooted in a tradition of service that began in 1924, AKHS,P's work reflects a long-standing commitment to compassion, dignity, and equity in healthcare.

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, attending the 60th anniversary of the Aga Khan Maternity Home (Janbai) in Kharadar, Karachi, on 14 November 1985.

Why this journey matters

In regions such as Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, where geography and isolation have long limited access to care, AKHS,P's journey has been transformative—evolving from volunteer-led outreach into a comprehensive health system that integrates community-based care, strong referral pathways, specialised services, and digital health innovation to ensure geography does not determine health outcomes.

Early Engagement (1960s–1980s)

After its beginnings in Karachi, AKHS,P gradually expanded its community healthcare presence to other parts of the country. Early milestones included the establishment of the Aga Khan Family Health Centre in Sultanabad Village, Karachi (1955), the Aga Khan Family Health Centre in Karimabad, Karachi (1963), and the first Basic Health Centre in Chitral (1962)—reflecting AKHS,P's growing commitment to bringing primary healthcare closer to remote and underserved communities.

AKHS,P's engagement in Gilgit-Baltistan deepened in the early 1970s through volunteer-led outreach campaigns responding to high maternal and infant mortality, preventable diseases, and limited access to basic health services. In

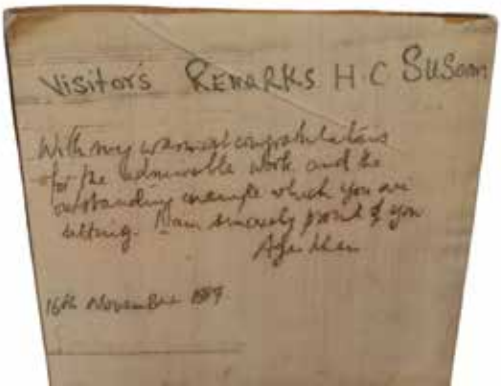
Princess Zahra Aga Khan visits BHC Immit, where a child who has recovered from stunting through an AKHS,P-implemented programme warmly welcomes her and her son, May 2024.

1974, the establishment of the first Maternal and Child Health Centre in Gilgit town marked an important step towards a more permanent healthcare presence in the region.

A landmark baseline survey conducted in Punial in 1986 revealed alarming health indicators, prompting AKHS,P to launch a Community-Based Primary Health Care programme in 1988 based on Alma Atta principles and essential components. Built on strong community participation, this programme introduced a three-tier model integrating community health workers, facility-based services, and mobile supervisory teams—laying the foundation for a sustainable, people-centred health system. At that time, the health burden was heavily skewed toward maternal and child health (MCH) issues and communicable diseases, which accounted for approximately 60% and 40% of the burden respectively. Through targeted, community-based interventions including immunization, maternal health initiatives, and outreach AKHS,P successfully achieved significant reductions in maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) issues as well as vaccine-preventable diseases.

During his historic visit to Chitral in November 1987, Prince Karim Aga Khan IV visited the Medical Centre in Susoom, where he recorded a heartfelt message in the visitors' book on 16 November 1987. In his remarks, he warmly congratulated the team for their "admirable work" and described the health centre as an "outstanding example," expressing that he was "sincerely proud" of the efforts being made. This personal note remains a meaningful reflection of his enduring encouragement and vision for strengthening community-based healthcare services in remote mountain regions.

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV at the Medical Centre in Susoom, Chitral, 16 November 1987.



Visitors' book remarks recorded during Prince Karim Aga Khan IV's visit to the Health Centre in Susoom, Chitral, on 16 November 1987.

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV with AKHS,P nursing staff in Booni, Chitral, 1987.

Transition to Clinical Services: Building the System

Through the 1990s and early 2000s, AKHS,P gradually expanded from preventive and primary care into family health centres and early clinical facilities, while working closely with government health departments.

A view of the plaque installed at Aga Khan Medical Centre, Singal, Ghizer.

The expansion of clinical services marked a decisive shift in AKHS,P's work in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral—from a system primarily focused on community-based primary care to one capable of delivering advanced, specialised healthcare.

Early clinical units laid the foundation for this transformation. The establishment of Aga Khan Medical Centre, Singal in 1983 was among the first steps toward facility-based clinical care in the region. Inaugurated by Aga Khan IV on 14 May, 1983, Singal Medical Centre is a 15-bed facility and a vital part of the AKHS,P network, established to deliver accessible, high-quality healthcare to underserved communities in Gilgit-Baltistan. Emphasizing inclusive service delivery at the inauguration, Aga Khan IV noted , **"Our surveys also showed us that what was broadly true of the needs of our own community was also true of the population generally... it was logical to design our new facilities for use by all communities, which is what we intend here in Singal."** He further highlighted the importance of maternal and child health, stating, "Children need to be cared for from the time they are conceived until they reach maturity, and I strongly advise expectant mothers to come here regularly." Today, the centre delivers advanced specialised care across urology, ENT, cardiology, and neurosurgery—significantly improving access to complex services closer to home—while continuing to uphold its founding vision of inclusive, community-centred healthcare.

Princess Zahra Aga Khan and Prince Rahim Aga Khan inaugurated the 50-bed Aga Khan Medical Centre, Gilgit, May 2016.

This evolution reached a defining milestone with the transformation of Aga Khan Hospital, Gilgit—from a basic health centre into the principal secondary-care referral hospital for Gilgit-Baltistan—advancing Prince Karim Aga Khan IV's vision of expanding access to quality healthcare in underserved regions. Purpose-built for a challenging mountainous environment, the hospital now spans approximately 145,000 square feet and operates 112 beds, delivering 24/7 emergency and trauma care, advanced diagnostics, surgical services, and inpatient care as the central hub of AKHS,P's regional network.

Secondary-care capacity was further strengthened in May 2016 with the inauguration of the 50-bed Aga Khan Medical Centre, Gilgit, by Princess Zahra Aga Khan and Prince Rahim Aga Khan V. Designed as a secondary-care hub, the centre expanded access to quality diagnostics and clinical services while digitally linking remote clinics with advanced medical expertise in Pakistan and internationally, and strengthening professional training and clinical research.

In November 2021, major expansions responded to shifting disease patterns and rising demand for specialised care, increasing bed capacity from 50 to 112 and transforming the facility into a fully functional general hospital. New services—including critical and acute care, emergency medicine, advanced diagnostics, specialised disciplines, and Tele-ICU—significantly enhanced the region's ability to manage complex and critical cases, supporting national health and development goals.

The introduction of specialised departments such as ENT, urology, cardiology, and neurosurgery further transformed access to care, reducing the need for referrals to distant tertiary hospitals. Notably, the region's first fully equipped ENT service introduced advanced diagnostics and specialised procedures, while urology services enabled the local management of complex conditions through minimally invasive and surgical care aligned with Aga Khan University standards.

ICT scan service at Aga Khan Hospital, Gilgit, Gilgit-Baltistan.

Princess Zahra Aga Khan inaugurated the purpose-built Aga Khan Health Centre, Aliabad, Hunza, 24 May 2024.

Aga Khan Medical Centre, Booni is a pivotal healthcare facility in Upper Chitral, providing essential obstetric, neonatal, and child health services to an estimated 250,000 residents. In addition, health centres in Aliabad, Gupis, Mastuj, and Shagram, along with THQ Hospital Garam Chashma, deliver integrated inpatient, outpatient, maternal, neonatal, and emergency care. The facilities in Mastuj and Garam Chashma are operated through public–private partnerships with the Government. The Aga Khan Diagnostic Centre, Chitral further strengthens early diagnosis and improves referral accuracy, supporting both AKHS,P and public-sector health facilities.

Aga Khan University (AKU) and AKHS,P recently signed an MoU to enable clinical faculty appointments for AKHS physicians. This strategic partnership aims to bridge clinical care with academic excellence by allowing physicians working at AKHS, Pakistan clinical units—to hold academic titles at the AKU Medical College, thereby strengthening clinical research and enhancing healthcare quality.

Princess Zahra Aga Khan at Aga Khan Medical Centre, Booni, Upper Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in May 2024.

Syed Nadeem Husain Abbas, CEO, AKHS,P, and Dr. Adil H. Haider, Dean, Medical College, Aga Khan University Pakistan, sign an MoU to strengthen collaboration in healthcare and capacity building (4 December 2023). AKU President Dr. Sulaiman Shahabuddin and Dr. Gijs Walraven, General Manager, Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS), are also present.

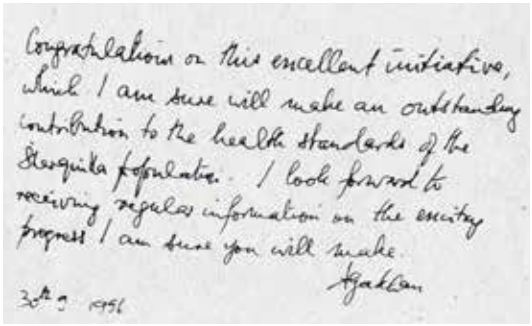
To further expand access to care—especially for communities in remote areas—AKHS,P launched the Elaj Asan mobile application on 22 September 2020 in collaboration with the Aga Khan Development Network Digital Health Resource Centre (AKDN dHRC). The app has strengthened doctor–patient interactions through digital health services.

This handwritten message, dated 30 September 1996, captures Prince Karim Aga Khan IV's personal encouragement for a health initiative serving the people of Sherqila, Gilgit. In his remarks, he congratulates the team on an "excellent initiative," expresses confidence that it will make an "outstanding contribution" to improving

Aga Khan Diagnostic Centre, Chitral, which achieved SafeCare Level 5 Accreditation in December 2025.

Princess Zahra Aga Khan with the delegation and AKHS,P Ishkoman Primary Health Care staff.

local health standards, and notes that he looks forward to receiving regular updates on the progress being made. The note reflects his enduring emphasis on quality, continuous improvement, and long-term investment in community-centred healthcare—principles that continue to guide AKHS,P's work across remote regions of Gilgit-Baltistan.



Congratulations on this excellent initiative, which I am sure will make an outstanding contribution to the health standards of the Sherqila population. I look forward to receiving regular information on the society progress I am sure you will make.

Aga Khan

30th Sept 1996

Visitors' book remarks by the late Prince Aga Khan IV at Sherqila.

Recognising the growing health risks posed by climate change, AKHS,P began its journey towards net-zero carbon emissions in 2020, aligned with its commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2030. Key milestones include the solarisation of Aga Khan Hospital, Gilgit through a 1 MW solar plant, alongside ongoing efforts to expand solar-powered and energy-efficient infrastructure across its network, including upgrades at Basic Health Centre Karimabad. These investments are strengthening service reliability, supporting frontline health workers, and helping ensure resilient healthcare for communities in climate-vulnerable regions.

The late Prince Aga Khan IV emphasised that health systems must evolve with changing disease patterns, prioritising prevention, long-term wellbeing, and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases. Guided by this approach, over the past five years,

this commitment has been reinforced through AKHS,P's growing institutional capacity to design and deliver complex, donor-funded programmes that pilot scalable innovations, strengthen health systems, and extend services in partnership with government across Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral, and select districts of Sindh. Key initiatives include the AKDN Integrated Mental Health Programme, Foundations for Health and Empowerment (F4HE) funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and AKFC, the Elderly Care Programme (a joint AKU–AKHS,P initiative), and SNIP funded by Gavi, The Power of Nutrition, and AKF-UK. This work is complemented by the Central Asia Stunting Initiative (CASI) (Imamat funding), RENEW Flood Response & Climate Resilience funded by GAC and AKFC, and the Sexual, Reproductive Health & Family Planning Project supported by GAC and UNFPA, alongside completed initiatives such as the Hayat Project (GAC and AKFC). Together, these partnerships reflect AKHS,P's ability to implement high-impact programmes at scale, strengthen primary and specialised care, build workforce capacity, and improve health outcomes through community-centred, technology-enabled delivery models.

Present: An Integrated Health System

Guided by Prince Karim Aga Khan IV's vision, AKHS,P continues to strengthen health systems and improve quality of life across Pakistan. Through an integrated network of health centres, diagnostic facilities, and hospitals—supported by a predominantly local workforce and strong community ownership—AKHS,P has delivered targeted interventions that have significantly reduced maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) challenges and vaccine-preventable diseases. This evolution reflects a lasting commitment to equitable, community-centred, and sustainable healthcare delivered with integrity and compassion.

AKHS,P Basic Health Centre, Karimabad (Hunza)

Prince Karim Aga Khan IV and Prince Amyn Mohammed Aga Khan visiting Janbai Maternity Home, Kharadar, Karachi. Dr Vazir Peer Mohammed Hoodbhoy breifing Prince Karim Aga Khan and Prince Amyn Mohammed Aga Khan.

Vazir Dr Peer Mohammed Hoodbhoy, great leader of Ismaili Community in Pakistan. He devoted his life to serve Imam of the time, community and huminity at large on volunteery basis. A great example and a role model for younger generation to follw his footsteps.

About The Author

Zulfiqar Ali Meghani

Mr. Meghani did his Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Law (LLB) from University of Karachi. He then went on to do Management at Institute of Business Administration, Karachi (IBA), and Actuarial Science at the Swiss Academy, Zurich, Switzerland. He later did Project Analysis and Project Management from USDA, Washington DC, USA. He has also attended all trainings programmes (5) on Human Resource Development for senior management by Aga Khan Development Network, Aiglemont, France.

Mr Meghani has worked in senior executive positions in Jeddah Oil Refinery and East West Crude Oil Pipeline (Petroline) in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Houston, USA. He has also worked as General Manager Projects in Industrial Promotion Services (IPS) Pakistan. His professional career culminated with an stint as Entrepreneur in Industry and Export Business.

He was also blessed to perform Hajj in 1976.

Mr Meghani firmly believes in giving back to the society not only as gratitude for the abundance blessings from Allah but also with the deep-rooted sense of responsibility to give back to the Society. He has held several honorary and voluntary positions within the Shia Ismaili community with service spanning over 50 years. He held positions such as Hon Administrator Manpower Training Project, Chairman, Joint Waezeen Training Programme, Chairmen Northern Areas (Ismaili Tariqa and Religious Education Board Pakistan), Honorary Secretary of the Aga Khan Economic Planning Board for Pakistan (AKEPB), Vice Chairman, Focus Humanitarian Pakistan and Executive Board Member on National Arbitration Board of Pakistan.

In order to create awareness in young generation, people of other age groups and share his knowledge, which he has gained through education in well known educational institutions both in Pakistan and abroad and experience of working with world renowned organisations, wide travelling and reading, he has compiled the following books:

1) 10 Top Scientists of the World.
2) 15 Great Minds of Islamic Golden Era.
3) Prominent Leaders of Pakistan Movement.
4) Enrich Your Life with Good Moral Values
5) Ninety Nine Names of Allah
6) Moral Values (Six Editions)
7) AKU-IED
8) Special Edition I - Tribute to Aga Khan IV

This is a special Edition (II) of his book on Tribute to Aga Khan. Earlier Six Editions of the book on Moral Values and book on Tribute to Aga Khan IV have been overwhelmingly appreciated by academia and other prominent personalities in all field as well as entrepreneurs and the youth. This has been a humbling experience for him and has encouraged him to publish Special Edition II on Tribute to Aga Khan IV.

Mr. Meghani lives in Karachi with his wife who has also rendered valuable honorary services to the institutions of community. He has two highly educated daughters who are both pursuing their career aspirations while also serving the community in voluntary capacity. His younger daughter has also served on the Executive Board of AKEPB.

REVIEWS

Hussain S. Jasani,
Head, South Asia
Institute of Ismaili
Studies, London

Mubarak on the great work. You may include bibliography of Dr Daftary's : 'The Ismaili Imams' as recommended Books on Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims

Dr Alnoor Abdullah,
Vancouver.

It is the most comprehensive and informative compilation of the contribution made by His Highness Shah Karim Al-Hussaini during his illustrious life. An absolutely essential read for scholars and individuals alike.

Mushtaq Ali Jindani
Hon: Sec: General,
Theosophical Society

Your book is more than a befitting tribute to Mowlana Shah Karim Al Hussaini's contributions on every field of human existence for the Jamat worldwide and the humanity at large.

Dr Barkat Charania
FRCS, Orthopedic Surgeon
Houston, Texas.

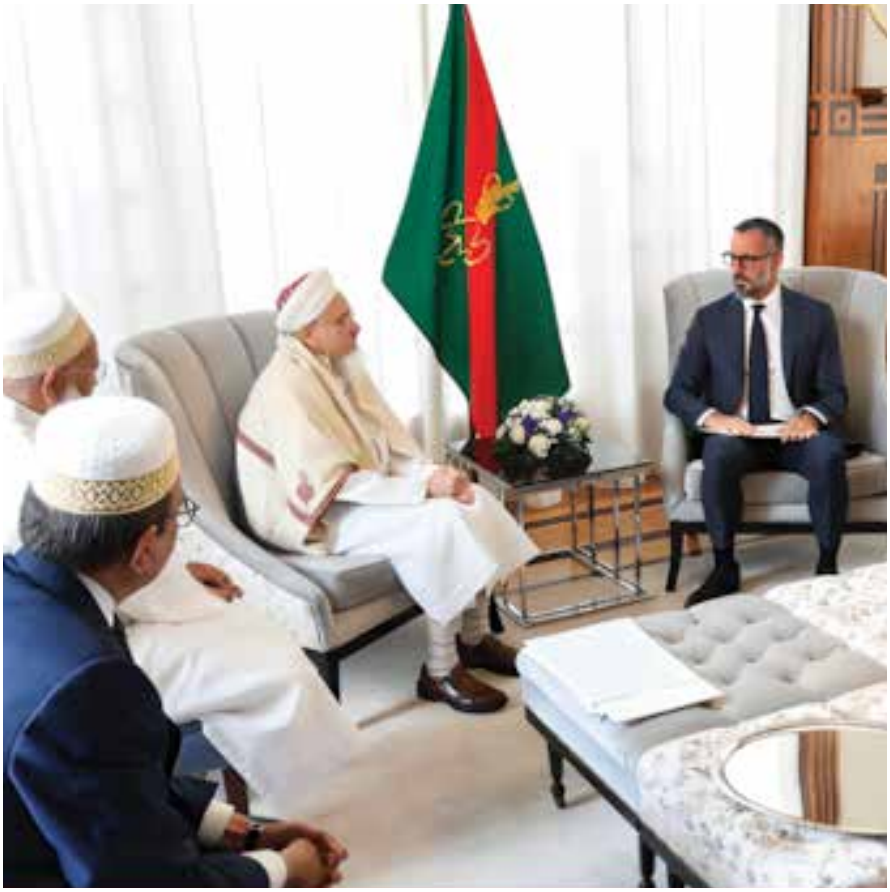
Zulfiqar Bhai,
Just received a package containing ~50 of your books.

Such a collection will be alive and useful for decades as reference to all interested in the life of Mawlana Shah Karim Al Husaini. His teachings, has created a large global impact on countries, people, and Muslims.

Thanks for your efforts.
Congratulations.

With Best Compliments From

Gul and Aftab Cumber,
Coral Springs,
Florida, USA.



Shazada Ammar Jamaluddin brother of the Bohra Community Leader, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin met H.H. Prince Rahim Aga Khan V in Lisbon, Portugal to offer condolences to Prince Rahim Aga Khan on the passing of Prince Karim Aga Khan IV.