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AKDN

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Winter Newsletter: *Pakistan edition*



AKAH wins the Gold Award for World Habitat Awards 2020

The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) has won the World Habitat Award's Gold Award 2020 for its "Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Technology for Safer Habitat" project. In the winning project, AKAH Pakistan pioneered the use of Hazard Vulnerability and Risk Assessments (HVRAs), which integrate science, technology and local knowledge for disaster risk management and sustainable habitat planning and development.

Reflecting on the importance of this work, Prince Rahim Aga Khan, Chair of the Aga Khan Development Network's (AKDN) Environment and Climate Committee, said "For decades the AKDN has been working with vulnerable communities to improve quality of life and reduce disaster risks. Today in the face of the climate crisis, understanding and mitigating these risks is even more urgent. Only by helping these communities adapt and thrive in harmony with their often-precarious habitat can we hope to mitigate the effects of climate change." The project combines local and scientific knowledge to assess hazards, map risks, determine residential and economic zones, and develop disaster management and habitat plans. AKAH geologists use remote-sensing and geographic information system (GIS) technologies and risk-scoring tools, combined with participatory risk assessment and community knowledge, to develop plans for safer habitats.

**world
habitat
awards**



Gold Award Winner 2020

Nawab Ali Khan, CEO, AKAH Pakistan, said that, "Winning this Gold Award is an honour for AKAH and gives us added motivation to do more for building safer communities and safer habitats. We at AKAH value the trust and engagement of the communities and volunteers we work with and the support of our local and international donors and partners who believe in our work integrating emergency planning and preparedness and habitat planning for climate change adaptation in Pakistan". In addition to conducting HVRA's, AKAH Pakistan implements a number of initiatives to achieve an improvement in the overall quality of life of the communities it works in.

Conservation of historic houses at the Chowk Wazir Khan

The Walled City of Lahore has an abundance of Mughal period monuments as well as buildings from the Sikh and British colonial periods. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Lahore Fort is also located on the northern edge of the Walled City. It is also one of the most densely populated localities of Lahore, where decades of neglect and substandard urban service provisions have resulted in poor living conditions. Most ordinary buildings in the walled city are structurally compromised and comprises low-income households, with



Exterior of houses before conservation

limited opportunities for sustainable income generation. In view of the above, the Aga Khan Culture Service-Pakistan's (AKCS-P) partnership with GoPunjab thus far has evolved into distinct and visible interventions ranging from neighborhood rehabilitation to monument conservation in the Walled City.

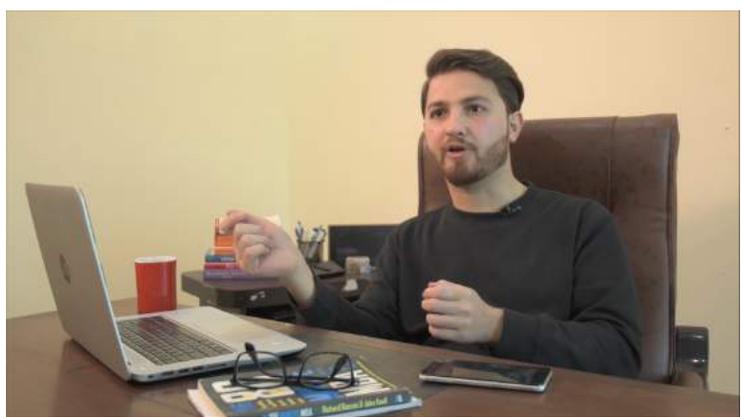
The principle of adaptive re-use is central to the organizations' mandates whereby previously derelict sites are transformed into viable sources of revenue. Historic preservation activities are designed as part of an area-wide and integrated urban conservation and rehabilitation framework that is socially inclusive. The average person being served is, therefore, anyone who is associated with the Walled City whether in terms of residence, place of work or as a tourist destination. Following the same principle, AKCS-P with support of the US Consulate and Walled City of Lahore Authority, will work to restore three historic houses constructed in the British colonial period, abutting the southern periphery of the 17th Century Chowk Wazir Khan. The conservation of these historic houses, together with the Wazir Khan Mosque and Chowk, aims to demonstrate best practices in historic preservation and adaptive re-use of ordinary buildings, which may then be replicated in other parts of the Chowk Wazir Khan and elsewhere in the historic core.



Exterior of houses after conservation

Accelerate Prosperity invests in digital future

“When you get that hit of financial crisis, you realize that it is no more an option to create a sustainable income source but it's a necessity. Accelerate Prosperity helped me in defining a clear vision for my startup, make a strong business model and raise investments.” Athar Ahmed, is an emerging entrepreneur from Mardan, Khyber Pakhunkhwa, who has started Simple Automation (SA) Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a software and technology company which focuses on providing customized and affordable software and technology solutions to small and medium businesses across Pakistan.



Athar Ahmed, Founder and CEO, Simple Automation (SA) Solutions

After his father's retirement, Athar and his family faced financial challenges and he realized the importance of creating a sustainable source of income. Like many other young students, Athar had also graduated with an inspired senior year project in his hands but unlike many, Athar decided to turn his project into a profitable business. He had faith in his idea but he didn't have the knowledge and support to convert it into a viable business.



Team SA Solution working on a smart solution for one of their clients

In 2020, he was selected in the first cohort of the International Certificate in Entrepreneurship (ICE), a joint program of Accelerate Prosperity (AP) and Altis School of Business Milan, and a customized business incubation program which provides financial and business training and advisory support to entrepreneurs with startups/ new ideas. After going through a four month incubation program, Athar was able to build a strong business model and develop investment readiness tools such as Information Memorandum, Financial Model and Pitch Deck. By the end of the program, his startup was ready for investments and he was able to unlock long term and patient financing of PKR 2.3 million from an investor and PKR 1.5 million from AP. His business was also nominated to pitch at PAKImpactInvest, Government of Pakistan's First National Investment Platform. In a year's time, Athar has created 2 full time and 6 short term jobs and has generated a revenue of around PKR 1 million.

Since its inception, AP has reached over 12,200 aspiring and existing entrepreneurs in Central and South Asia – of which 43% are youth. The portfolio companies fall into various sub-sectors including textile, agro-processing, livestock, agriculture, IT, health, education, hospitality, waste management and adventure. To date, these companies have created over 1,060 new direct jobs and have sustained many indirect jobs.

AKU - CRM to develop new, targeted therapies for blood cancer

The Aga Khan University's (AKU) Centre for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research (CRM) has secured a PKR 14.5 million grant to develop new, targeted therapies for a common form of blood cancer in adults, Philadelphia chromosome positive (Ph+) leukemia. The grant was awarded by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan's flagship National Research Programme for Universities that seeks to support high-level and promising scientific research projects that demonstrate strategic relevance and impact to local industry and society.

Existing medicines for Ph+ leukemia are currently proving to be less effective due to growing drug resistance and side effects. They also require life-long use by the patient and do not lead to complete eradication of the disease. AKU researchers are looking to develop a more effective treatment by engineering stem cells to deliver a protein with therapeutic properties directly to the leukemia cells.

“We aim to combine approaches in molecular medicine and stem cell therapy to create a more precise form of treatment that has the potential to be more convenient for the patient since it will only require a single administration,” says AKU’s Dr. Afsar Mian, the principal investigator of the study. “We are anticipating that once introduced, the stem cells will grow and multiply in the body and continuously release the therapeutic peptide to target the cancer cells, inhibit their growth and ultimately cure the disease.” In the future, Dr. Mian and his team will seek to combine their expertise in cancer research as well as drug design and delivery to see if such approaches can be used to treat other diseases.



AKU's CRM is developing targeted remedies for blood cancer

AKES,P alumni enhance the local school environment

Rafiq Hakim Ali, a graduate of the Sultan Mahomed Shah (SMS) Aga Khan School’s class of 1986, decided to get in touch with his former classmates. “We are spread all over the world,” he said. “I called and visited old friends in the US, UAE and of course, Pakistan.” This rekindling of old friendships was more than just personally rewarding for him. Together with the former students, now alumni, they decided they wanted to give back to the school where they spent so many years together learning, exploring and shaping who they are today.



Going greener - AKES Alumni planting trees to enhance local school environments

This resolve to give back has already resulted in their collective efforts to improve the local environment, with 500 trees being planted at the SMS Aga Khan School, including 154 trees planted as a 516 square foot urban forest comprised of 14 species of local trees, including

mulberry, almond, fig, lemon and tamarind. The idea for an urban forest blossomed when Faisal Islam, one of Hakim Ali's fellow graduates revisited the school with his family. As Faisal was proudly showing the school's grounds and open spaces to his wife Dr. Majda Kazmi, an Assistant Professor at



NED University, she remarked that it would be an ideal place to plant a small forest. When Siraj Narsi, also a former student of SMS Aga Khan School, heard about this unique project, he offered to sponsor the plants. Meanwhile, the cost of preparing the ground for the forest and planting the trees was contributed by Hakim Ali and his friends. The forest was inaugurated on 2 November 2020 by the Vice-Chancellor of the NED University of Engineering and Technology, Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodi, and the Chairperson of the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, Mr. Moez Narsi.

AKRSP providing support to COVID affectees in time of need

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) has been implementing a wide scale COVID-19 mitigation and response plan ever since the pandemic reached Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. Aside from creating awareness at the community level, AKRSP, through its network of civil society organizations, has been implementing a range of activities to benefit those affected by COVID-19. These include referral and transport facilities and the provision of essential supplies.

This is the story of a woman, Khush Nahoor, who has benefitted from AKRSP's COVID-19 response activities. Khush Nahoor is a resident of Singal village in District Ghizer, Gilgit-Baltistan which is one of the most affected villages by the COVID-19 pandemic with 300 people testing positive and many others having succumbed to the virus. Khush Nahoor lives with her husband and children. Her husband, though differently-abled, works part-time as a watchman and has a meagre monthly salary of PKR 2500 per month – barely enough to run the household, let alone afford medical care. Hence, when Khush Nahoor experienced the symptoms of COVID-19, she could not seek medical help due to financial constraints.

Since she was not able to afford medical aid, Khush Nahoor contacted Hilbush Local Support Organisation (LSO) task force for financial support. The LSO Task Force took facilitated her transport and referral to the DHQ Hospital Gahkuch and upon testing positive, the Task Force monitored her home isolation and provided PPEs for fourteen days. Upon the request of the LSO Task Force, a local philanthropist took the responsibility of delivering food supplies to her family whilst she remained isolated. After completing her isolation, the LSO supported her to get a follow-up test in DHQ Hospital. Upon testing negative, Khush Nahoor thanked both the LSO and

the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme for the support extended towards facilitating her diagnosis and treatment.

Serena sponsors crafts exhibition

15 November 2020: Serena Hotels sponsored a three-day crafts extravaganza with Behbud Association called “Embroidering Dreams”, which kicked off with an inaugural event featuring an exclusive fashion show. Embroidering Dreams was an exhibition of exquisite handmade products promoting traditional needlework and embroideries of Pakistan. The three-day exhibition aimed to celebrate home based workers and women artisans of Pakistan, that continue to produce such marvelous artefacts under trying circumstances.



First lady Samina Arif Alvi visiting a craft stall at the exhibition

Addressing the opening ceremony of the exhibition, the First Lady Samina Arif Alvisaid that the Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, believed that Pakistan could only progress if its women participated in industrious activities side by side with men. She applauded Serena Hotels for supporting Behbud Association, a non-profit organization providing employment to thousands of women artisans for over 50 years. The opening event was attended by notable members from the diplomatic corps, foreign dignitaries, corporate and business sectors.



First Lady, Samina Arif Alvi, addressing the opening ceremony of the 3-day exhibition

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels appreciated Behbud Association for the wonderful work which he said was very inspiring and a model of learning for Serena Hotels, which also actively projects and promotes traditional crafts as part of its overall CSR initiative of supporting empowerment of rural women by enhancing their economic prospects. Ms. Abida Malik said that Behbud was run entirely by women volunteers and has over the years evolved into Pakistan’s premier brand for ethical and sustainable fashion. Having trained 300,000 artisans spanning five

generations, Behbud, at its core, aids marginalized women by providing them with free of cost vocational training in local embroideries, free healthcare, counseling and education for their children.

Treading new ground in newborn care

Each year approximately, 136 million babies are born and as many as 15% of these births encounter potentially life threatening complications. However, most of the time, healthcare providers use traditional methods for child survival in service delivery and are not equipped with advanced methods. There are a number of innovative techniques used to train health care staff on innovative ways for child survival in service delivery. ‘Simulation’ in newborn care is one such technique that can be used to train staff in a way that they can practice life-like scenarios with hands-on practice in an interactive manner by using mannequins. Globally, simulation trainings have become an integral part of teaching-learning process in the health care system. However, in Pakistan, this concept is still new. Helping Babies Breath (HBB) and Helping Babies Survive (HBS) are evidence-based, hands-on training programmes that have emerged to meet the need for practical and low-cost simulated training.

In November 2020, training sessions were conducted in Islamabad by faculty members from the Aga Khan University Hospital to train master trainers for HBB/HBS. Through these trainings eighteen master trainers were trained which provided training to around 82 healthcare providers in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Chitral. The participants of these trainings included government healthcare providers and management staff as well. Participants learnt about the ‘golden minutes’ of a child’s life and essential and recommended newborn care practices. Below is a success story shared by a Lady Health Visitor (LHV) who works at AKHS,P’s health centre in the Yasin valley in GB.



Putting the training to test

Nasirah Ali works as a senior LHV with an AKHS,P’s health centre. She attended the training of master trainers on HBB/HBS. One day, Nasirah was at the Basic Health Center when an expectant mother visited the BHC with labor pain. As this was a pre-term case, Nasirah tried to refer her to a hospital in Gilgit. Her husband refused as they could not afford treatment at a hospital. The baby was delivered at the health centre, but it wasn’t crying at birth and was not moving either. On Nasirah’s direction the mother tried to stimulate the baby through skin-to-skin contact. Nasirah started ventilation but the baby was still not crying, although there it showed some movement. Nasirah again started ventilation. This time the baby started crying, and when

examined his respiration and breathing were normal. The infant was kept in observation for an hour. The LHV briefed both the mother and her attendant on how to feed and care for the baby at home. After five days the mother with her baby visited the health centre for a postnatal checkup; both mother and baby were well. Nasirah said: “This case was completely new to me and full of risk, but Alhamdulillah it was done successfully due to HBB/HBS training, where we learnt about skin-to-skin care and ventilating a newborn,”

Webinar on habitat planning: an adaptive climate change strategy

5 February 2021: The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) in collaboration with Institute of Architects (IAP), Karachi Chapter arranged a webinar, titled “Habitat Planning: An adaptive climate change strategy”.

Around 9000 participants including development professionals, members architects of IAP Karachi Chapter, representatives of AKDN agencies and members of voluntary bodies. AKAH's leadership from Pakistan and Geneva, briefed the audiences about AKAH's mandate of building safer habitats through developing synergies with leading international and local research institutes in designing tools for habitat planning.

05 Feb 2021
5:00 PM PKT

POWERED BY:
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Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

IAP-KC PRESENTS AKAH's INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNING PROJECT
HABITAT PLANNING: AN ADAPTIVE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

ONNO RUHL
FIRST GENERAL MANAGER OF THE AKAH. ONNO PREVIOUSLY HELD THE POSITION OF THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR IN AKAH FOR NEPAL. HE HAS A LONG STANDING EXPERIENCE WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND NATURAL DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION.

NAWAB ALI KHAN
NAWAB ALI KHAN IS THE CEO OF AKAH IN PAKISTAN SINCE 2016. HE HAS SERVED AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD AND MEMBER STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE AGA KHAN RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM AND THE HERITAGE TRUST OF THE HEALTHY PORT.

KIRA INRATOR
LEADS URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR AKAH. SHE IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE MIT ALUMNA PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AWARDS. SHE IS A FELLOW FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE PRESTIGIOUS IBM THOMAS J. WATSON FELLOWSHIP.

SALMANUDDIN SHAH
HEAD OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OF THE AKAH AND HAS WORKED WITH FOCUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. PREVIOUSLY AS PROGRAMME MANAGER FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE. HE HAS REPRESENTED THE COUNTRY IN INNUMERABLE SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS.

MODERATED BY KHADIJA JAMAL
CONSULTING ARCHITECT AND PROJECT MANAGER WITH 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA AND WOULD ENJOY FOR DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES.

For the last twenty years, AKAH has been relying on Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (HVRA) tool for habitat planning. It has mapped around 800 settlements across Pakistan that are vulnerable to climate change and disasters. These maps help in identifying current hazards and risks, and serves as guidelines for individuals and authorities in building resilient infrastructures at identified safer locations. Climate change impacts underscore the importance of habitat planning in highly vulnerable areas. Yet, it affords a unique opportunity for all the stakeholders to develop out of box solutions. AKAH has been pursuing the goal of safe and green infrastructure practices to reduce the carbon footprint, and to provide an enabling environment for creation of livelihood opportunities and sustainable development.

Dear Readers,

Thank you for taking the time to learn about AKDN's work in Pakistan. If you have any questions about the articles, please contact Maria Hayat Khan, Programme Officer Partnerships, AKF Pakistan, at maria.khan@akdn.org.

Special thanks are due to Mashaal Shaukat (AKCS-P), Muhammad Altamash (AKU), Hussain Odhwani (Serena Hotels Pakistan), Aziz Ali Dad (AKRSP), Anila Shaheen and Imran Shams (AP), Mehar Aftab (AKAH,P), Rubab Karrar (AKES,P), Younus Khan (AKHS,P), Athar Tanveer, Faheem Tareen, Sakhawat Ali, Muhammad Karim, and Sultan Ishaq (AKF (Pak)) for their contributions.

Please look for the next volume of the AKDN Newsletter in Summer 2021. For more information, visit our website: www.akdn.org/Pakistan