



Overview of the Aga Khan Development Network

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of private, international, non-denominational agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in some of the poorest parts of the developing world.

The Network's organisations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and the promotion of private-sector enterprise. Together they collaborate in working towards a common goal – to build institutions and programmes that can respond to the challenges of social, economic and cultural change on an ongoing basis.

The Network brings together a number of agencies, institutions and programmes that have been built up over the past 40 years and, in some

cases, date back to the early twentieth century. AKDN agencies conduct their programmes without regard to the faith, origin or gender of the people they serve.

Economic Development

The *Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED)* works to strengthen the role of the private sector in developing countries by promoting entrepreneurial activity and supporting private sector initiatives. AKFED also plays a catalytic role in mobilising investment in developing or transitional economies. It makes investments in industrial production, infrastructure, tourism development, financial services, aviation and media. It promotes the creation of the enabling legal and fiscal structures that ensure the viability of private sector initiatives.

Because of its institutional background and ethical framework, investment

decisions are based more on prospects for improving the lives of people in the developing world than on bottom-line profitability. AKFED takes bold but calculated steps to invest in environments that are fragile and complex. It has assisted in the rehabilitation of economies after civil conflict or internal turmoil in environments as varied as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Uganda.

Social Development

The *Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance (AKAM)* seeks to alleviate economic and social exclusion, diminish the vulnerability of poor populations, reduce poverty and help people become self-reliant. AKAM operates in both urban and rural settings and offers a range of microfinance services, including micro-insurance, savings services, housing credits and education loans.

AKDN's education activities include more than 300 schools ranging from pre-primary through to university post-graduate courses. Girls, the very poor and geographically remote populations receive special attention.



The Aga Khan Development Network has agreements or protocols with the following countries and organisations: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, India, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mali, Mozambique, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United Nations. Individual agencies also work closely with local, state and national governments in each country in which they are active.

AKDN and its constituent agencies actively seek to co-operate with like-minded institutions in the design, implementation and funding of innovative projects. With the help of programme partners, they seek to demonstrate that flexible private organisations with carefully defined objectives can make significant contributions to the well-being of large numbers of people.

Cover Photo:

The creation of the 30-hectare (74-acre) Azhar Park, undertaken in the historic district of Cairo by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, is proving to be a catalyst for urban renewal in one of the most congested cities in the world.

Loans are accompanied by training in basic business concepts so borrowers can become financially self-reliant entrepreneurs.

The *Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)* seeks sustainable solutions to the long-term problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ill health throughout the world, with special emphasis on the needs of rural communities in mountainous, coastal and other resource-poor areas. AKF focuses on rural development, health, education, environment, and the strengthening of civil society. Its programmes include the Aga Khan Rural Support Programmes, the Mountain Societies Development Support Programmes and the Coastal Rural Support Programmes.

The *Aga Khan Education Services (AKES)* operates more than 300 schools and advanced educational programmes at the pre-school, primary, secondary and higher secondary levels in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uganda, Tanzania and Tajikistan. It aims to diminish the many obstacles to educational access, quality and achievement.

The first of a planned network of over 20 Aga Khan Academies was inaugurated in Mombasa, Kenya, in December 2003. The Academies, dedicated to expanding access to education of an international standard of excellence in Asia and Africa, feature a curriculum based on the International Baccalaureate, a special emphasis on the humanities, and a robust system of international student and teacher

exchanges. Admission is merit-based and needs-blind.

The *Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS)*, with 325 health centres, dispensaries, hospitals, diagnostic centres and community health outlets, is one of the largest and most comprehensive private, non-profit health networks in the developing world.

The *Aga Khan Planning and Building Services (AKPBS)* works to improve the built environment through design and construction, village planning, natural hazard mitigation, environmental sanitation and improved water supply systems. It achieves these aims by providing material, technical assistance and construction management services for rural and urban areas.

Two universities are part of the Network. *Aga Khan University (AKU)*, Pakistan's first private, autonomous university, headquartered in Karachi, is a major centre for education, training and research in the health sciences and teacher education. Chartered as Pakistan's first private international university in 1983, it has since established branches and institutes in East Africa and the U.K. AKU is also creating a new Faculty of Arts and Sciences campus in Karachi.

The *University of Central Asia (UCA)* is the world's first university dedicated exclusively to education and research in mountain regions and societies. Located on three campuses, in Khorog, Tajikistan; Tekeli, Kazakhstan; and Naryn, Kyrgyz Republic, it will offer a Master of Arts

degree within the School of Development and a Bachelor of Arts programme based on the liberal arts and sciences.

The School of Professional and Continuing Education, which is already offering classes, is Central Asia's first provider of formal, university-based, non-degree educational programmes, offering vocational, professional development and personal improvement opportunities to youth and adults.

Culture

The Network's initiatives in culture, architecture, architectural education, urban revitalisation and traditional music are the responsibility of the *Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC)*.

The Trust focuses on culture as a means of enhancing the physical, social and economic revitalisation of communities in the Islamic world. Its programmes include:

- *The Aga Khan Award for Architecture*, established in 1977, which is the world's largest prize for architecture. Presented every three years, it not only rewards individual architects for exemplary contemporary work but also singles out projects that propose innovative and replicable solutions to problems of social development.
- *The Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme*, which was set up in 1992 to implement conservation and urban revitalisation projects in culturally significant sites of the Islamic world. Such projects bring environmental, conservation and

socioeconomic components to bear on development issues in urban and rural settings.

- *The Education and Culture Programme*, which consists of four major units: the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); ArchNet.org, a virtual archive of materials on architecture, urban design and urban development; the Music Initiative in Central Asia, which works to ensure the preservation of Central Asia's musical heritage and its transmission to a new generation of artists and audiences; and the Museum Projects, which develops museum and exhibition projects, including two museums in Cairo and Toronto.

AKDN agencies make a long-term commitment to the areas in which they work. They are guided by the philosophy that a humane, sustainable environment must reflect the choices, made by people themselves, of how to live and improve prospects in harmony with the environment. Sustainability is, therefore, a central consideration from the outset.

While each agency pursues its own specific mandate, they all work together within the overarching framework of the Aga Khan Development Network so that their different pursuits can interact and reinforce one another. Their common goal is to help poor communities achieve a level of self-reliance whereby they are able to plan their own livelihoods and help those even more needy than themselves.



"Development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well. Education and skills training, health and public services, conservation of cultural heritage, infrastructure development, urban planning and rehabilitation, rural development, water and energy management, environmental control, and even policy and legislative development, are among the various aspects that must be taken into account."

— His Highness the Aga Khan, speaking at the Prince Claus Fund's Conference on Culture and Development, Amsterdam, 7 September 2002.

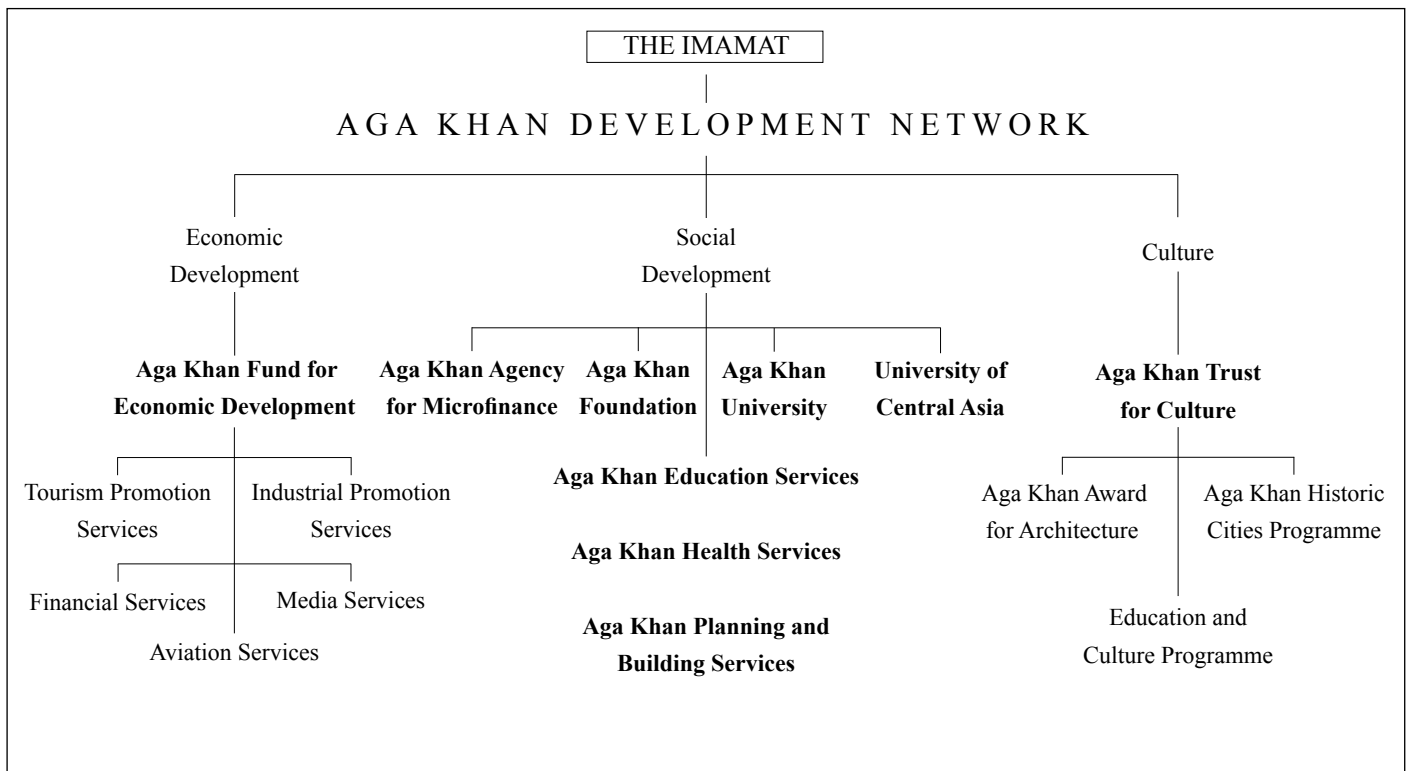
Picture above:

The Aga Khan (centre) reviewing construction of an Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa, 2003.



Among other activities, AKFED mobilises investment for the construction, rehabilitation and expansion of infrastructure. The 288-megawatt Azito power facility, developed by AKFED, ABB and Electricité de France, provides 30 percent of the energy needs of the Ivory Coast.

AKDN's community-based rural development programmes such as this one in Tajikistan link elements such as rural savings and credit, natural resource management, infrastructure, increased agricultural productivity, human skills development, health, education, sanitation and clean water systems.



For further information

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