



## Overview of the Aga Khan Development Network activities

*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 forty 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), a not-for-profit agency, seeks to alleviate economic and social exclusion, diminish the vulnerability of poor populations and reduce poverty. It aims to 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*

AKDN's education activities extend from pre-primary through to university post-graduate courses. In Mombasa, the first of over 20 Aga Khan Academies offers an international standard of excellence in education.



*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 likeminded 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) Al-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.

education loans. 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 and the strengthening of civil society. Its programmes include the Aga Khan Rural Support Programmes and the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme.

The *Aga Khan Education Services (AKES)* operate 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. They aim 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, will feature a curriculum based on the framework of the International Baccalaureate, with special emphasis on the humanities. There will be a robust system of international student and teacher exchanges between Academies and allied schools. Admission is merit-based and means-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 completing a new Faculty of Arts and Sciences campus in Karachi.

The *University of Central Asia (UCA)*, based in Khorog, Tajikistan, 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 Division of Continuing Education and Training provides a new approach to adult education, offering non-degree courses in local languages to mid-career professionals and the general public in practical areas relevant to economic and social development.

## 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 to enhance 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 Historic Cities Support 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 settings.
- *The Education and Culture Programme*, which consists of five

major units: the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), established in 1979; Archnet ([www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org)), a virtual archive of materials on architecture, urban design, urban development and related issues (also based at MIT); the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia, which is concerned with the revitalisation of traditional music; the Aga Khan Humanities Project, which promotes pluralism of ideas, cultures and people by supporting the development and implementation of innovative humanities curricula; and the Museums Project, which works on the conceptualisation, design and realisation of museum projects initiated by the Trust.

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 they live and wish to improve their prospects in harmony with their environment. Sustainability is, thus, 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.

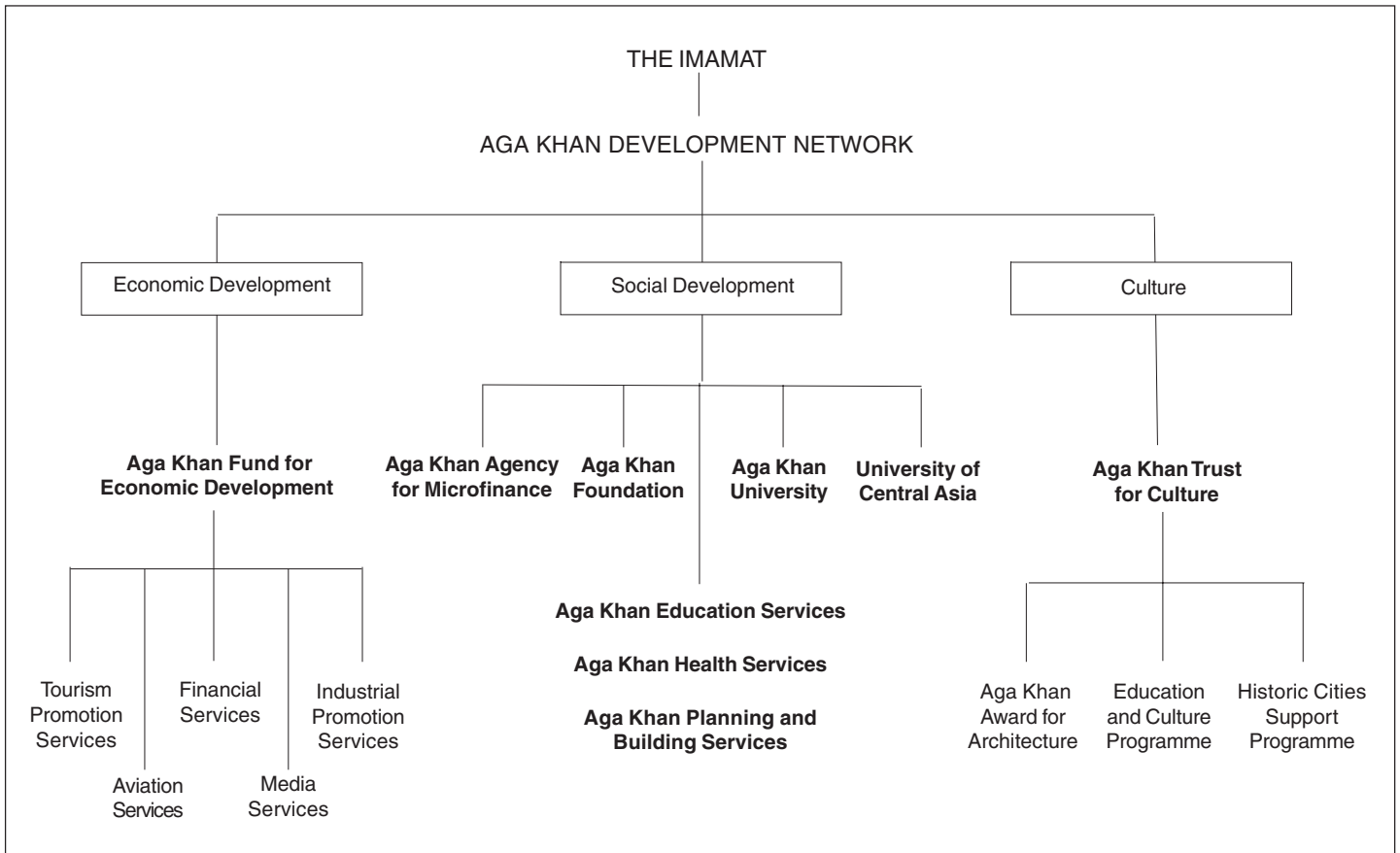
*“Development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well. Education 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, Prince Claus Fund's Conference on Culture and Development, Amsterdam, 7 September 2002.



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 rural development programmes link elements such as rural savings and credit, natural resource management, productive infrastructure development, increased agricultural productivity and human skills development with a concern for community-level participation and decision-making.



**For further information**

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