



GOLDEN JUBILEE
1957 • 2007



CANADA

Spark of Knowledge

KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY CHALLENGE
ISSUE STATEMENTS



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THE FOLLOWING AKDN PRIORITY AREAS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THE KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY CHALLENGE:

1. CARING FOR THE AGED - AGING IN A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT
2. ULTRA-POVERTY - TURNING THE TIDE OF POVERTY
3. THE ROLE OF MICROFINANCE IN UNLEASHING OPPORTUNITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
4. CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
5. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS - LIMITING THE LOSS OF LIFE AND ASSETS
6. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE
7. ALTERNATIVE AKDN PRIORITY AREA



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ISSUE CATEGORY #1:

CARING FOR THE AGED — AGING IN A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

BACKGROUND

At the Inaugural Ceremony of the Golden Jubilee, Mawlana Hazar Imam identified caring for the aged as a top priority. The well-being of this segment of the Jamat is of extreme importance and it is therefore critical that the right systems are in place to ensure that the aged continue to lead happy and healthy lives.

Before an appropriate solution can be found, the root cause of a problem must be identified. Often, this varies by locality. For example, the transition of modern society leading to the disintegration of the joint family system has resulted in the loss of the traditional authority of older people in some societies. This has left the aged in isolation, facing poverty and a lack of social security and intergeneration bonds, causing them grave concerns that sometimes lead to psychological disorders.

In other societies, aging is a social problem because the institutions of modern society are not meeting the needs of the dependent elderly. The psychological difficulties of the aged stem largely from the fact that their new status is poorly defined, and they therefore tend to accept the negative labels that are applied to them. Moreover, many families are often ill-equipped to care for elderly parents, making institutionalization the only alternative for those who are unable or unwilling to live alone.

PRACTICAL SOLUTION

The Ismaili Seniors Action Team (ISAT), a program of the Aga Khan Health Board for Canada, is one example of how an institution helps to address the needs of the aged. However, to fully satisfy the needs of the elderly, the work of ISAT needs to be complemented by the work of other institutions. The National Initiative on Care for Elderly (NICE) developed by the National Institute of Social Defense (NISD) in India is an example of an institution that addresses the needs of the aged. In order to cope with the problems faced



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by the aged, it is necessary to educate and import training to people concerned with the welfare of the elderly.

NICE aims to improve the well being of the elderly. Thus, it is involved in (i) identifying the specific needs of the elderly; (ii) building capacity among service providers and cadre of professional caregivers; and (iii) creating an enabling and social environment and attitude.

ISSUE STATEMENT

Looking in our own backyard, what are the issues facing the aged here in Canada? What are the barriers to success? How would you propose to solve these issues, either by adding to the work already being conducted by institutions in Canada or by starting a completely new initiative?



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