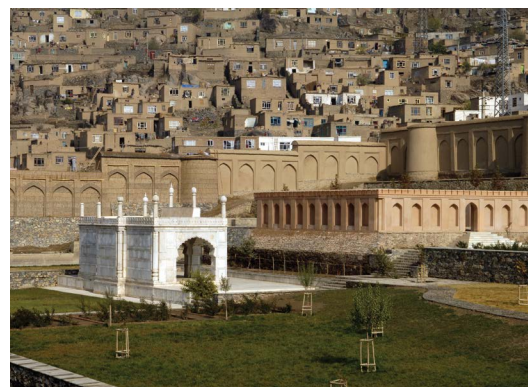




AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

60 YEARS OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE



HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN
— ◆ —
DIAMOND JUBILEE
1957 • 2017



www.akdn.org

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE: 60 YEARS OF MILESTONES

This year (2017-2018) marks the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Aga Khan. As in many other traditions, jubilees mark important anniversaries. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations therefore represent both a recognition of the Aga Khan's work over the last 60 years and an opportunity to launch new initiatives – for the Ismaili Muslims as well as the communities in which they live – that improve the quality of life for all.

However, these celebrations and their purpose are often misunderstood. The images of Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III, being weighed in diamonds during his Diamond Jubilee still resonate in the public imagination. What was not commonly known at the time was that the funds gathered from weighing ceremonies were used to launch social programmes that benefited the most vulnerable in society.

These institutions include the Platinum Jubilee Hospital, which is now the non-profit Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi (one of the few hospitals in Africa to be ISO- and JCI-accredited); the Diamond Jubilee Investment Trust, which started off as a community lending enterprise, and grew into a major retail financial institution – now called Diamond Trust Bank (DTB) – that helps promote small and medium enterprises across East Africa; the Jubilee Insurance companies, the largest providers of life and medical insurance across East Africa and Asia; and the non-profit Diamond Jubilee Schools in India and Pakistan, which were among the first to educate girls.

BUILDING INSTITUTIONS

Although weighing ceremonies are not part of the current Aga Khan's Jubilee celebrations, many of the institutions created under the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and its institutional predecessors over the last 100 years were jubilee projects: schools, clinics and hospitals, electricity generating plants, companies offering essential goods and services, early childhood programmes that give poor children a head start, hotels that set standards for environmental stewardship, an architectural award that has influenced architectural discourse for four decades, universities and



PLURALISM: Institutions such as the Global Centre for Pluralism (GCP) in Ottawa, Canada, established in 2006, help bridge and heal divisions across different faiths and between developed and developing countries.



CULTURE: The AKDN integrates cultural development into many of its projects. The various city parks and gardens it has built, such as Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, Egypt, provide tens of millions of urban dwellers with oases of green space.



HEALTH CARE: To reduce the high incidence of preventable deaths during childbirth in Afghanistan, AKDN has trained over 400 midwives in the country, about 10 percent of the total.



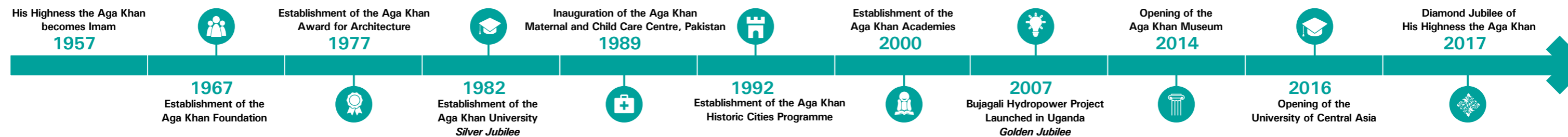
EDUCATION: The Diamond Jubilee School in Mumbai, India, established in 1947, is today part of a network of 200 quality Pre-K to 12 schools operated by AKDN. These schools have a total annual enrolment of 73,000.



RESEARCH: The Aga Khan University (AKU), which has campuses in Pakistan and East Africa, is one of the developing world's leading sources of health and education research, creating new knowledge with the potential to save and enhance millions of lives.



FINANCIAL SERVICES: In some of Tanzania's poorest provinces, the Network is providing the rural poor a safe and inexpensive way to save money through digital savings groups.



■ AKDN programmes and institutions

nursing schools that provide essential human resources for developing nations, savings groups that help the poorest of the poor weather financial hardship and build a better future, to name a few.

Many of these projects were initially launched to meet the needs of the Ismaili Community in South Asia and East Africa. However, today, under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan, these institutions have grown beyond that mission to encompass projects in areas where there are many faiths and ethnicities and even where Ismailis do not live. Ismaili communities in poor and remote areas do benefit from AKDN projects, but the programmes, when at full scale, typically benefit a wide cross-section of the population. All Imamat institutions, like the AKDN, were created to offer opportunities and improve the quality of life for the communities in which they are present.

PLURALISM

Other institutions, such as the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, and the Global Centre for Pluralism (GCP) in Ottawa, help bridge and heal divisions across different faiths and between developed and developing countries. Pluralism is

central to that notion. Pluralism “does not mean that we want to eliminate our differences or erase our distinctions,” His Highness the Aga Khan said at the opening of the GCP. “What it does mean is that we connect with one another in order to learn from one another, and to build our future together.”

A HEREDITARY INSTITUTION

It is also important to note that the Imamat, the hereditary office that His Highness the Aga Khan currently holds, is a Muslim institution that is over 1,400 years old. As the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Muslims, the Aga Khan traces a direct descent from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family). As such, the ethics of the Islamic faith underpin the work, among them the responsibility of environmental stewardship, the obligation to perform good works and to look after the needs of the most vulnerable in society. Whether

undertaken by the Aga Khan Development Network, or other institutions, the ethical component sets the work apart: it is not philanthropy or charity, but part of the mandate and responsibility of His Highness the Aga Khan to improve the quality of life in keeping with the ethics of Islam.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VOLUNTEER

“We have all seen examples of God’s most wonderful creature, the person, whether in a government bureau, a business, or a private development agency, who is inspired to give generously of himself, to go beyond the mechanical requirements of a task.

“Such men and women, paid or unpaid, express the spirit of the volunteer, literally the will to make a product better, a school the best, a clinic more compassionate and effective. Their spirit, generating new ideas, resisting discouragement, and demanding results, animates the heart of every effective society.”

-- His Highness the Aga Khan speaking at the (first) Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 21 October 1986

Cover page: (top left to right) A nursery schoolteacher in Arua, **Uganda** works on alphabet letters with her students; His Highness the Aga Khan with schoolchildren in **Pakistan**, in 1960; Bagh-e-Babur garden restored in Kabul, **Afghanistan**; **(middle left to right)** a power generation project in Jinja, **Uganda**, which supplies nearly half of the electricity in the country; His Highness the Aga Khan, Diamond Jubilee 1957-2017; a student in Chitral, **Pakistan**, who attends one of 200 schools operated by the Network in Asia and Africa; **(bottom left to right)** In Kabul, **Afghanistan**, the French Medical Institute for Children (FMIC) has recorded nearly 780,000 patient visits; His Highness the Aga Khan with students at the Aga Khan Academy in Hyderabad, **India**; the Coastal Rural Support Programme in southern **Tanzania** works with smallholder farmers.

For further information:

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