



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

Overview of the Aga Khan Foundation



FACTS AT A GLANCE

FOUNDED IN: 1967

THEMATIC FOCUS: Rural development, health, education, civil society and the environment

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS: Resource-poor and remote areas in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda

STAFF WORLDWIDE: 3,800

AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET:
US\$ 325 million

AN AGENCY OF THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), alongside its sister Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies, has implemented innovative, award-winning and community-driven solutions to development challenges for more than 45 years. It focusses on a small number of specific development problems by forming intellectual and financial partnerships with organisations sharing its objectives. With a small staff, a host of cooperating agencies and thousands of volunteers, the Foundation reaches out to vulnerable populations on four continents, irrespective of their race, religion, political persuasion or gender. The map which appears on the opposite page provides a snapshot of AKF's current activities.



Thematic areas and objectives

AKF focusses on five thematic areas: **rural development, health, education, civil society and the environment**. Its activities are intended to improve the quality of life of beneficiary communities by assisting in the struggle against hunger, disease, illiteracy, ignorance and social exclusion. AKF's objectives for its programming include as follows:

- Make it possible for the poor to act in ways that lead to long-term improvements in their income and health, in the education of their children and in the environment;
- Provide communities a greater range of choices and the understanding necessary to undertake informed actions;
- Enable beneficiaries to develop confidence and competence to participate in the design and operation of activities that affect the quality of their lives; and
- Put institutional, management and financial structures in place to ensure activities are sustainable without AKF assistance within a reasonable timeframe.

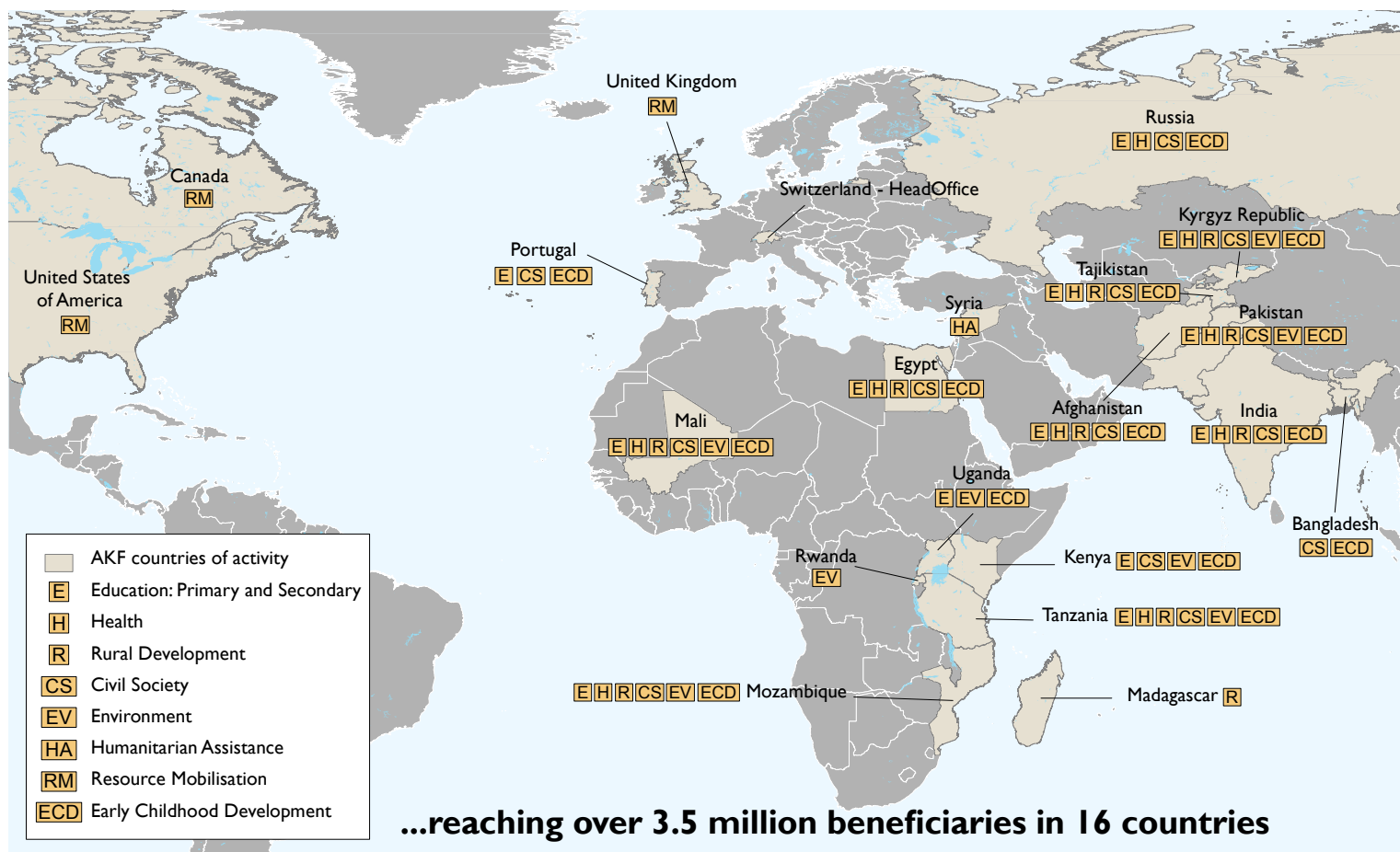
Geographic areas of focus

AKF is largely a field-based organisation with programme units located in **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda**; resource mobilisation offices in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States; and headquarters based in Geneva, Switzerland. In Asia, Africa and the Middle East, activities are most often concentrated in rural communities in mountainous, coastal and other remote, resource-poor areas. In Europe, urban peripheries are targeted to address challenges commonly faced by new and often poor immigrant communities. In every context in which it works, the Foundation's efforts are coordinated not only with those of other AKDN agencies, but also with local, national and international partners in order to bring to bear a full package of multiple activities that can spark a long-term process of positive change for these communities and, ultimately, improve their overall quality of life.

The Foundation's oldest country programme is in Pakistan, where many of its activities are undertaken by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP). The largest country programme is in Afghanistan. Within every developing country context, AKF chooses to focus on certain regions. Criteria for undertaking activity include special needs in impoverished environments as well as the presence of capable implementing organisations. It normally engages a volunteer base locally in order to ensure knowledgeable and culturally sensitive management of local affairs.

Development approach

AKF has helped to pioneer the **Multi-Input Area Development (MIAD)** approach, which leverages the capabilities of multiple AKDN agencies (and as is the case for AKF,



multiple thematic areas of focus within each agency) in order to **deliver social, economic and cultural interventions together in the targeted geographies to accelerate development over time**. MIAD allows efforts to reach fruition, creates the basis for sustainable growth in remote regions and builds links with public and private sector partners. Over time, economic drivers embedded within these efforts generate revenues that communities can utilise for development.

AKF's programmes have historically focussed on rural areas, especially within resource-poor, degraded or remote places. Enabling people in these areas to create the services they need and receive access to the opportunities they want is particularly important for AKF. AKF programmes typically link elements such as rural savings and credit, natural resource management, productive infrastructure development, increased agricultural productivity and human skills development, with a central focus on community-based participation and decision-making. The ultimate objective is to enable community members to undertake well-informed activities for sustainable and equitable development.

The first such effort began with AKRSP in the remote northern areas of Pakistan, an impoverished and rugged region which was isolated and bypassed by developments elsewhere. AKRSP's challenge was forming sustainable, inclusive processes of development in which diverse communities could participate in creating joint solutions to common problems. In response, AKRSP has successfully tested participatory approaches to planning and implementation of development in rural areas, including the mobilisation of rural savings and the provision of microcredit; the application of cost-effective rural infrastructure development; institution and capacity building; and models for public-private development partnerships. The model has helped shape activities elsewhere.

Central to AKF's efforts have been **inclusive, community-based development approaches**, whereby local organisations identify, prioritise and implement projects with AKF's assistance. Once community organisations have started providing services, AKF expands the programme through establishing village organisations elsewhere. AKF then



ABOVE: In Bihar, India, AKF supports community-managed learning spaces and provides teacher training and curricula input that helps to make classroom learning relevant to children's daily lives.

OPPOSITE (top to bottom): In Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, Pakistan, AKF supports various programmes that help provide integrated water supply infrastructure services to local communities, which in turn help to prevent water related diseases through improved hygiene and sanitation practices. Providing communities on both sides of the Afghan-Tajik border regular access to a common market provides opportunities for merchants to meet and exchange goods, and drastically increases their potential for income generating activities and improved livelihoods. In Lindi, Tanzania, AKF provides production extension support to rice farmers and facilitates partnerships between them and agro-processing companies.



brings them into federated structures and links them with local governments through collaboration on development issues. It also provides fund-raising advice and contacts through its civil society activities.

Most AKF activities are implemented by effectively managed, local organisations interested in testing new solutions, in learning from experience and in being agents of lasting change. However, if no established group exists, AKF occasionally establishes new organisations to tackle particularly important issues. AKF generally maintains **long-term involvement in building social institutions**, and thus is able to make commitments to communities as well as carry through changes in attitudes, behaviours and organisational abilities, which require a longer time horizon.

Learning and evaluation

AKF projects are designed to contribute lessons towards understanding complex issues and identifying potential solutions for adaptation to conditions in different regions. **AKF measures success when beneficiaries report improvements in their lives, and when the processes which led to these improvements serve as useful models in other places.** Wherever relevant, approaches are tested primarily in rural settings but also in some urban settings, and within different cultural and geographic environments.

Evaluation and dissemination are equally essential. International teams, collaboratively with implementers, conduct reviews at agreed intervals in the project cycle. The conclusions are shared with AKF affiliates, beneficiaries and interested governmental and non-governmental organisations. Valuable lessons are brought to the attention of policymakers to enhance decision making, and to the public to raise awareness of important issues facing developing countries.

Information for partners

The Foundation is largely an implementing organisation rather than a grant-making foundation. It receives grant funding from numerous development agencies, private foundations and corporations; raises funds locally in annual events in North America and Western Europe; and receives funding from His Highness the Aga Khan. In addition, an endowment contributes towards its operating costs.

When AKF does make grants or pursue collaborations, they are generally targeted to grassroots organisations testing innovative approaches in the field to specific development problems within AKF's focus. AKF units are field-based, so queries are best sent directly to country offices. Please see the following web page for more information and criteria about the grant-making process, including the addresses of our country offices:

http://www.akdn.org/akf_grantees.asp

ABOVE (top to bottom): The Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme in Aswan, Egypt focusses on improving quality within existing childcare and kindergarten services, while also encouraging new ECD services for parents and children as needed in communities. In Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, AKF is working with rural populations to catalyse improvements in their food security and livelihoods.

COVER: The cases de santé which AKF helped to establish in Mopti, Mali have helped to dramatically reduce the incidence of maternal and newborn death.

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The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private development agencies working to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities, especially in Africa and Asia. Its agencies work in over 30 countries for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion. Its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

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