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AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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*Pakistan Edition*



## Aga Khan University Graduates 777 Students, Celebrates Founder's Day and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



**18 March 2023:** The Aga Khan University celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2022, its first-ever Founder's Day and the University's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 18 March 2023. Simultaneous ceremonies were held in Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and broadcast online to an international audience of AKU's friends and supporters. Princess Zahra Aga Khan attended the ceremony in Karachi and shared a message from His Highness the Aga Khan, Founder and Chancellor of the University. Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah was the Chief Guest. A total of 777 students graduated from AKU's global campuses with diplomas and degrees in 19 fields, bringing the total number of diplomas and degrees awarded by the University to more than 19,000, including more than 4,500 in East Africa. In Pakistan, the School of Nursing and Midwifery graduated its 5,000th student. Students graduated in nursing, medicine, education and media and communications.

"Graduands, my wish today is that you will know the joy of planting hope in people's lives, of building bridges of understanding, of venturing into the uncharted waters where new knowledge is discovered," His Highness the Aga Khan said. "May your futures be rich in challenges embraced and overcome. May you be bold amid uncertainty, and see your boldness rewarded."

*Princess Zahra Aga Khan, Mr. Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister of Sindh, Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, President AKU along with other senior dignitaries attended the ceremony in Karachi.*

*In his message, His Highness the Aga Khan traced AKU's 40-year journey from 1983 to the present, calling AKU a source of hope and expressing pride in its achievements and confidence in its future.*

*"Today, as in 1983, the future of the University lies in the hands of its leaders, faculty, staff, and supporters," His Highness said. "Together, all of us are the custodians of the founding vision. Our history gives us every reason to believe that so long as we remain true to that vision, AKU's light – the light depicted in the University's seal – will grow ever brighter, helping to illuminate the path to a better future for the people it serves."*



*AKU's 40<sup>th</sup> year will see the launch of several new academic programmes.*

*In Pakistan, classes will begin at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.*

*In East Africa, the University will begin offering a six-year Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery and a four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing. In Kampala, Uganda, the University is building a new campus that will include a University Hospital and academic centre.*

*The Chief Guest in Tanzania was Ambassador Manfredo Fantì, Head of the European Union Delegation to Tanzania and to the East African Community. In Uganda, the Chief Guest was Ms. Cornelia Penzel, KfW Country Director for Uganda.*

*In Kenya, the Chief Guest was Dr. Beatrice Muganda Inyangala, Principal Secretary, State Department for Higher Education and Research.*

AKU dates its inception from the receipt of its Charter from the Government of Pakistan on March 16, 1983, making this its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary week. Founder's Day is a new annual tradition at AKU. On Founder's Day, the University reflects on the vision of His Highness the Aga Khan, celebrates AKU's impact and recognizes all those who are making the founding vision a reality: faculty, staff, donors, volunteers, students, alumni and partners. Princess Zahra Aga Khan expressed her gratitude to the global University community for the "magnificent gift" of its support for AKU over the past four decades. "As we mark its inaugural Founder's Day, its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the graduation of the Class of 2022, AKU has never had more to celebrate," she said. "I am deeply, deeply grateful to everyone who has made its journey possible."

President Sulaiman Shahabuddin paid tribute to His Highness and "his vision of a university that reconciles loyalty to international standards with service to those in need, that prepares its students to use knowledge to identify and solve problems, that demonstrates that science is the property of no single culture, but of all humanity." "It is thanks to his singular devotion to making that vision a reality, no matter the obstacles, that we are here today," President Shahabuddin said. Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, the Chief Guest of the ceremony, said, "I am glad to be able to take this opportunity to thank the members of the AKU community who came to the aid of their fellow citizens in their hour of need, whether as volunteers or as donors. The fact that so many AKU students participated in the University's flood response speaks highly of them and of the education that they have received here."



## AKAH's Early Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme (ERP) for flood affected families: Towards a new beginning.



It was a rainy day in Brok, a small valley located in Chitral, Pakistan. Hawala Bibi was at home, concerned about the heavy downpour. The rain did not seem to stop and soon turned into a disastrous flood that destroyed everything in its path, even the house of Hawala Bibi. Hawala Bibi was living in her ancestral house with the children of her deceased brother who had died of cancer, when the flood hit and destroyed their house.

*AKAH's Eco-Friendly Light Weight Prefab Homes in Nagar, Hunza. These homes are built for the flood affected communities.*

Pakistan is recovering from last year's devastating floods that put one third of the country under water. A combination of heavy rains and riverine, urban, and flash flooding since last June has affected 33 million people, with more than 1,730 lives lost as well as 2.2 million housing units impacted. The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Pakistan and its partners worked tirelessly to provide food, shelter and medical aid/ medicines and initiated the construction of eco-friendly prefabricated homes for the flood-affected families in Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Hawala Bibi was one of the families selected. She is now living in her newly built prefabricated home. According to Hawala Bibi, the newly constructed house by AKAH is "no less than a blessing for her, as she no longer has to worry about building a house." As part of Early Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme (ERP), AKAH has completed construction of 130 prefabricated homes and is working to complete another 196 homes for flood affected families in different areas of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. The prefabricated houses provide the affected families with dignity and a sense of security and above all reduce their sufferings and help them become more disaster resilient.



*Hawala Bibi showing her prefabricated home to Dr. Riina Kionka, the Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan and Ms. Nusrat Nasab, CEO of AKAH who recently visited the site in Chitral.*

## AKRSP Inaugurates Irrigation Channel to Benefit 1,800 People and Irrigate 3,000 Kanal of Land in Shimshal, Hunza



*Community members and AKRSP team gathered at the site during the inauguration ceremony.*

**22 March 2023:** The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) has completed the construction of an irrigation channel in Rech Das Shimshal Hunza, bringing water to thousands of hectares of arid land. The project, costing PKR 16.6 million, was inaugurated on 21 March 2023. AKRSP collaborated with the local community to fund the project, with PKR 16 million provided by AKRSP and approximately PKR 600,000 contributed by the local community.

The project was inaugurated by Senior Minister of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, Col. (R) Abaid Ullah Baig, accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Gojal, Muhammad Zulqarnain Khan, Regional Programme Manager of AKRSP, Yasmeen Qalandar, and the community members. The 5,800-foot-long channel was initially constructed by the community but was unable to carry water from the source to the land. Recognising the need for improved irrigation, AKRSP

contributed and started the pipe irrigation project to carry water to the 3,000 kanal of land from the source. The project will benefit over 230 households comprising more than 1,800 people across four different villages and eight Village Organisations and Women's Organisations. Speaking on the occasion, Senior Minister Col. (R) Abaid Ullah Baig said, "The government is grateful to the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and AKRSP for this unique project. It is a great contribution to the government's massive plantation drive." The community expressed gratitude to AKRSP for their support, stating that this project would improve their quality of life and future generations in Rech Das Shimshal. In addition to the irrigation project, AKRSP and the Government plan to plant 100,000 trees this year and to irrigate the entire 3,000 kanal of land thereby increasing the area under irrigation and income generation opportunities while minimizing water losses through seepages.



## HBL Microfinance Bank Wins 10 GDEIB Awards for Achievements in Gender Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



The HBL Microfinance Bank (HBL MfB) has received 10 awards from the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) in 2022 for its outstanding achievements in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. This brings the total number of such awards won by HBL MfB since 2019, to 22, and has made the Bank one of the top 10 most inclusive companies in Pakistan. The Bank's commitment to creating an environment that values diversity and inclusivity is reflected in its diverse workforce, which comprises individuals from different cultures, genders, and religions. The Bank sees diversity as a strength and believes in bringing together individuals with diverse backgrounds to add value to its clients' lives. HBL MfB is committed to creating a workplace where diverse backgrounds and thinking are not just accepted, but everyone takes pride in who they are.

*Muhammad Amir Khan, CEO & President - HBL MfB, receiving the award from Arif Saeed Chairman - Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), in the presence of Maya Inayat Ismail, Member Board of Directors, and Wajid Ali, Head of Human Resources.*

In 2019, HBL MfB participated in the GDEIB Awards for the first time and won one award. In 2020, the Bank won four awards, and in 2021, it won seven awards. This year, the Bank participated in 10 categories and won all 10 awards. HBL MfB's achievements in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace reflect its commitment to creating an inclusive workplace that values the contributions of all employees regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, or background. This success can be attributed to its hiring practices, with a particular focus on gender diversity. The policies in place have enabled the Bank to increase its women workforce from 15.63 percent in December 2021 to 17.72 percent in December 2022. HBL MfB aims to further enhance the percentage of women employees in the years to come. To support this mission, HBL MfB has undertaken several initiatives, including the "Reboot" Female Returnship Program, where women on career breaks are encouraged to become part of the labour force again.

## Preservation and Promotion of Cross-Cultural Edifices of Lahore Fort



*Donald Blome, US Ambassador to Pakistan, with the staff of Aga Khan Cultural Services – Pakistan (AKCS-P) and the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA).*

As part of a larger Master Conservation Plan for the Lahore Fort, Aga Khan Cultural Services – Pakistan (AKCS-P) and the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) are undertaking several conservation initiatives to preserve and promote the fort's rich cultural heritage. The latest initiative, "Preservation and Promotion of Cross-Cultural Edifices of Lahore Fort," is funded by the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) with almost \$1 million in funding.

The project's objective is to preserve and promote seven significant monuments of the Lahore Fort, including the Picture Wall, Loh Temple, Sikh Temple, Zanana Mosque, Sehdera pavilion, Athdara pavilion, and the grand Sheesh Mahal. Its overarching goal is to highlight the cultural diversity and cohesion of Lahore's past while promoting interfaith harmony and tolerance. US Ambassador Donald Blome inaugurated the project during his visit to Lahore Fort on 15 February 2023. He expressed pride in the US Mission's partnership with AKCS-P and WCLA in conserving the Fort. The project aims to draw more tourists and generate revenue for the local government to improve visitor services, amenities, and cultural and historical awareness. Along with the preservation work, the initiative also seeks to enhance capacity in historic preservation and traditional building crafts, benefiting both craftsmen and young graduates while contributing to the sustainability of the preservation industry.



## Beekeeping, Education, and Women Empowerment are Creating a Buzz in Gilgit-Baltistan



Rozina Jabeen, hailing from Karimabad, Hunza currently works at Karighar, Serena Hotels' CSR project for beekeeping, where she oversees honey collection by female beekeepers.

The second eldest in a family of four sisters and one brother, Rozina's story is one of many middle-class families in Pakistan. With her father working in construction in Saudi Arabia for three decades, to provide, Rozina overcame societal challenges to pursue education with her family's unrelenting support. With a degree in Food Sciences from Karakoram International University (KIU), she remained a position holder and was awarded a gold medal by the President of Pakistan, Mamnoon Hussain. She later earned her MPhil, focusing her research on the production of cherry and apple jams - two fruits abundant in the region.

Working as a Quality Assurance Manager at Karighar empowers not only herself, but other women working in traditional beekeeping, ensuring a steady income, financial independence, and an arsenal of technical skills. Rozina herself is highly qualified at what she does, running empirical tests, ensuring food and safety standards to meet ISO 9001 quality criteria. In a field dominated by men, she is one of the 12% of women in STEM working in agricultural sciences in Pakistan. Rozina hopes that her journey will encourage women to work in this industry. She has plans to incorporate research and technical training for the production of fruit jams and jellies - an economic strength of the region. Her journey expands possibilities for sustainable income for women in Gilgit-Baltistan. Rozina hopes to inspire and serve as an example that dedication to education can lead to great things.



*Rozina using a refractometer to check solid sugar content from a sample of freshly harvested honey.*



Aga Khan Schools' alumni are winning accolades for their innovative and outstanding work, and we couldn't be prouder!



*President of Pakistan, Honourable Dr. Arif Alvi presenting the Sitara-e-Imtiaz, the 3rd Highest Civil Honour to Samina Chagani.*

Samina Chagani, an alumna of Aga Khan School, Garden, and Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Karachi, as well as a recipient of Aga Khan Education Board scholarship, received the Sitara-e-Imtiaz, the 3rd highest civil honour presented by the State of Pakistan for service to the country. Samina was recognized for her work as part of the Financial Monitoring Unit of the Government of Pakistan. As a member of the core team of the Financial Monitoring Unit, Samina had the opportunity to represent Pakistan at various international forums. She assisted in reviewing and updating more than 20 federal and provincial legislations; development of regulations; and implementation of SOPs / directives on a wide range of activities such as international cooperation and mutual legal assistance, efforts that resulted in Pakistan's removal from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) grey list. Another alumna, Ahmed Wali, a 2022 graduate of Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Gilgit, and his tech startup Wetual, won the National Idea Bank's National Innovation Award for IT, Cyber, and E-Commerce with their app Caliber. Wali, whose tech company Wetual develops software and applications, of which Caliber is one. It was one of almost 4,000 entries for the award and won at the city, provincial, and national levels. The award was presented by the honourable President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, who set up the National Idea Bank to identify and build a repository of innovative, local solutions to indigenous problems.



*President of Pakistan, Honourable Dr. Arif Alvi presenting the Award to Ahmed Wali.*



## AKU-IED's Master's Programme Receives Highest Accreditation from NACTE



The National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE), a prestigious division of the Higher Education Commission, has awarded the highest 'W' category accreditation to the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development's (AKU-IED) Master of Education (MEd) degree programme. The MEd programme is the first and only master's level programme to receive such a ranking in the country. NACTE is renowned for its rigorous requirements and evaluation criteria, hence the programme underwent thorough examination. This accreditation establishes AKU-IED as a top school for teacher education by recognizing the programme's exceptional quality, rigorous curriculum, qualified faculty, and cutting-edge facilities.

Expressing his views on the rating, Dr. Farid Panjwani, Dean of AKU-IED said, "We are honoured to receive this accreditation from NACTE which demonstrates our dedication to offering education that satisfies the highest standards of excellence."

The MEd programme is intended to provide teachers with advanced training in curriculum creation, teaching methods assessment, research, and leadership. The programme also aims to improve the professional competence of educators and equip them to meet the evolving demands of the education sector. Dr. Muhammad Memon, Chairperson of NACTE said, "AKU-IED has always been at the forefront of providing innovative and high-quality teacher education. This 'W' category accreditation is testament to the institution's dedication to upholding high standards in teacher education. We applaud AKU-IED and its leadership for their efforts and commitment to enhancing the quality of teacher education." Established in 1993, AKU-IED works as a catalyst for educational change by developing Passionate and Transformative educational professionals. Its more than 1,400 graduates are influencing policies, changing the culture in the classroom and are also training scores of new teachers.



## Family medicine training receives CPSP accreditation in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral



A training programme for Family Medicine specialists in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Chitral, run jointly by the Aga Khan University (AKU) and Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS,P), has received accreditation by the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP). Providing quality care in rural and remote settings remains a significant challenge in Pakistan and globally.

*AKUH and AKHS, P clinicians at Aga Khan Medical Centre, Gilgit.*

Family Medicine is a primary care medical specialty that offers ongoing and comprehensive healthcare services for individuals and families of all ages, managing a wide range of illnesses and conditions across the lifespan. As such, it is uniquely suited to meet the challenge of improving healthcare access for rural and remote communities. However, physicians are often not trained to work in low-resource settings, and the lack of career growth opportunities and low pay scales lead to high turnover rates, creating gaps in care for these communities. With this accreditation from CPSP, doctors in GB and Chitral have a unique opportunity to access world-class training in Family Medicine at their doorstep. Doctors can now complete a two-year residency programme at designated health and medical centres of AKHS, P and at AKUH, and sit in the Member of College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (MCPS) exam. This will, hopefully, open the path to a rewarding career for doctors as well as pave the way for providing quality care to rural and remote populations.







Dear Readers,

As we complete the first quarter of 2023, we are delighted to share the impact of AKDN's work in the country with our readers. The achievements have been possible due to the hard work of the AKDN agencies working on the ground and the communities who have become the owners of the development process. We want to thank the Government of Pakistan and all our partners who have been supporting AKDN's development work in the country for many decades.

If you have any questions about the articles, please contact the editor, Laila Naz Taj, Senior Programmes and Communications Manager, AKDN Pakistan and Afghanistan, at [laila.taj@akdn.org](mailto:laila.taj@akdn.org).

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The next volume of AKDN Newsletter will be available in Summer 2023.

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