

AKES has developed Learning Resource Centres at both AKL and government schools in the GBAO region, which are used by students, teacher and community members for research and other learning purposes.



#### Partners

Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC)  
 Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED)  
 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)  
 Embassy of the United Kingdom  
 Netherlands Organisation for International Development (NOVIB)  
 Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)  
 US Agency for International Development (USAID)  
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The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is 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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## TAJIKISTAN



### Aga Khan Education Services

*Tajikistan's education system has been confronted by significant challenges in the past decade as it faced an exodus of teaching talent and a significant decline in government funding following the break-up of the Soviet Union.*

*An important part of the country's development going forward is an education system that can help its future leaders develop critical thinking skills, understand the ways of the global economy and communicate effectively with the rest of the world.*

*As citizens begin to reassert the indigenous culture that had often been overlooked in the Soviet era, education is also taking on increasing importance in fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity amongst the Tajik people.*

*Established in Tajikistan in 1995, the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES)*

*seeks to address these needs by directly intervening in the education process, facilitating the professional training of teachers, strengthening existing schools and providing scholarships.*

#### Aga Khan Lycée

Established in 1998, the Aga Khan Lycée (AKL) is the first privately-operated school in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) region. Each year, AKL educates over 950 students from grades 1 to 11 with a graduation rate above 90 percent.

The Lycée aims not only to offer a high quality education to its students and prepare them for studies at first-rate universities, but also to test and develop new teaching and learning approaches which can be established as models of best practice in Tajikistan.

The curriculum at AKL is offered in three language streams — English, Tajik and Russian — in order to encourage students to develop fluency in more than one language. The curriculum focuses on student-centred approaches that foster critical thinking skills while also developing creativity and problem-solving abilities. Special attention is paid to teaching the Tajik language and cultivating a knowledge and appreciation of the country's rich history, literature and culture.

The professional staff of 63 teachers at AKL is offered constant pedagogical and English language training. With support from AKES, seven AKL educators have obtained their Master's in Education degrees from the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) in Karachi while another 12 have participated in AKU-IED's Certificate in Education programme.

A chemistry teacher at the Aga Khan Lycée in Khorog instructs students on an experimental lab. The Lycée encourages teachers to use experiential learning methods in the classroom.



The Aga Khan Education Services supports teachers in Tajikistan to attend international development trainings. Seven teachers from the Aga Khan Lycée have received a Masters in Education Degree and twelve others received a Visiting Teacher Certificate from the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development in Karachi.

AKES has sent more than 100 other teachers for training in language content, English proficiency, critical thinking, creative writing and leadership at institutions ranging from the Osh Institute of Western Education in Kyrgyzstan to Phillips Academy in the USA.

Outside the classroom, AKL's extra-curricular clubs and camps help students develop life skills in areas such as theatre, dance, sports, business, English, mathematics, television and student government. Students also benefit from a highly developed Learning Resource Centre, including 105 Internet-connected computers which are used to help students develop study skills, understand how to conduct research electronically and pursue independent learning projects.

### Allied School Project

In collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation, AKES established the Allied Schools Project (ASP) in 2002 to use the progress achieved and lessons learned at the Aga Khan Lycée to raise standards of education in six government schools in the districts of GBAO. This goal has been primarily pursued through the professional development of ASP school teachers, the development of Learning Resource Centres (LRC) in these schools and the improvement of school buildings and facilities.

AKES conducts in-school trainings to teach educators at ASP schools new approaches to teaching. The sessions are followed up with teacher shadowing sessions at AKL, where these methods are already in place. Further workshops on educational leadership are being conducted to introduce more effective styles of management into these schools. To date, these programmes have benefited over 400 teachers and

30 administrators and, in turn, their 3500 students. Outcomes have included improved student attendance and improved matriculation results.

To complement the introduction of these more interactive approaches to learning, AKES has developed LRCs in ASP schools which are used for seminars, video viewing and as libraries, to the benefit of students, teachers and local community members. These centres also provide a way for schools to generate non-budgetary funds, enabling them to expand the resources offered.

AKES has supported extensive rehabilitation efforts at ASP schools, including repairing roofs, replacing heaters and purchasing new desks, chairs and chalkboards. These efforts have sought to enhance the learning environment and enable classes to continue during the cold winter months, while also generating community support for the schools by employing local residents in the improvement projects.

### Scholarships

Each year, AKES offers scholarships for both undergraduate and postgraduate study in Tajikistan and abroad. Since 1993, the Tajik Scholarship Programme, funded by the Aga Khan Foundation and managed by AKES, has allowed more than 200 meritorious students from Tajikistan the chance to access quality undergraduate education in Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. More

than 65 scholarship recipients have gone on for further study.

A summer internship programme was started by AKES in 2003 to help scholarship recipients explore different career fields and gain work experience upon their return home. Placements are made within AKDN affiliates in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and have included the PamirEnergy company, the First MicroFinanceBank and the University of Central Asia.

Through the District Scholarship Programme, over 80 awards have been given to students from the districts of GBAO enabling them to study at Khorog State University. The Aga Khan Lycée has also awarded more than 120 scholarships since 2001 to enable students from the districts of GBAO to attend AKL.

### Summer Programmes

AKES administers several summer experiences, such as the Youth Leadership Forum, which brings together two students from each of the 13 high schools in Khorog, including the Aga Khan Lycée. The Forum aims to develop participants' leadership skills

and encourage the application of these skills in school action projects that address social issues affecting Khorog.

Launched in 2005, the AKES Summer Camp is a residential programme held in the Bartang Valley in GBAO aimed at helping students develop teamwork, leadership skills, self-esteem and an understanding of the notions of pluralism and civil society. Participants are comprised of both AKL and government school students.

### Looking Forward

AKES will continue to expand and enhance its existing programmes. It is also now working with the Institute for Professional Development, an agency of the Government of Tajikistan, to develop an Early Childhood Development (ECD) strategy for GBAO.

The programme will aim to provide children six years of age and younger ECD experiences before they reach primary school in order to maximise their learning potential thereafter. AKES hopes to eventually launch an ECD centre in Khorog as well as home-based kindergartens in districts and remote villages.

*"We live in a time of rapid change — change that is often unpredictable and not always positive. My experience with development, as an observer and a practitioner, has led me to the conclusion that the best way to manage change, whether positive or negative, is to prepare for it and that there is no greater form of preparation for change than investments in education.*

*But education comes in many forms and has been used for many purposes. An education for success in the modern world must be enabling and it must be outward looking. It must not only teach the time tested skills of reading, writing and mathematics, which remain important and must not only build on Central Asia's fine tradition of encouraging students to master more than one language.*

*Today's students need to learn to use computers. The ability to use communication and information technology is now a critical part of the learning..."*

— Speech By His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening Ceremony of the Aga Khan School, Osh, Kyrgyz Republic, 30th October 2002



AKES experiments with innovative learning methods at the Aga Khan Lycée before introducing them in partner schools. The ultimate aim is to improve educational outcomes by engaging students more in the learning process.