Adapting to Climate Change

The effects of climate change can often destroy productive assets and put people in a cycle of poverty. While all AKDN agencies undertake activities that in some way help vulnerable communities to build resilience to these effects, the agencies which lead this effort in terms of expertise and experience are the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF).

Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

Natural disasters often take a heavier toll on poorer communities. In addition to the loss of life, an annual depletion of assets leaves them in a perpetual cycle of poverty. Now rapid climatic changes are increasing the regularity and intensity of natural disasters – and the costs to these communities.

To address the increasing threat posed by natural hazard climate change, a new agency, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), brings together a number of activities focussed on preparing for both sudden and slow-onset disasters. AKAH works to ensure that poor people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters; that residents who do live in high-risk areas are able to cope with disasters in terms of preparedness and response; and that these settings provide access to social and financial services that lead to greater opportunities and a better quality of life. Initially, priority areas for AKAH include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and India.

Aga Khan Foundation

For over 30 years, the AKDN’s model of rural development – pioneered by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and aimed at effectively reducing poverty and improving the local economies of targeted geographies – has been adapted and replicated widely. As the rural development programmes move into their fourth decade, they are also addressing the emerging challenges of rapidly changing demography, climate change and unpredictable geo-political circumstances. In India, AKF reaches nearly 1.5 million people with natural resource and water management, alternative crops, sprinkler irrigation and employment services; in the northwest of Madagascar, the Foundation has worked to reduce poverty by helping rice crop productivity to increase by up to three-fold; in Pakistan, it has planted tens of millions of trees, constructed hundreds of bridges and supported thousands of infrastructure projects that benefit over 1 million people; in Afghanistan, interventions assist 3 million people across 7 central and north-eastern provinces.

Support the AKDN

Partnerships

Typically, when the AKDN refines its development approach in a given area, it looks to partners to help expand the scale. A significant portion of the funding for AKDN activities therefore comes from national governments, multilateral institutions and private sector partners. For more information, visit: akdn.org/partners

Individuals

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Join the conversation

www.akdn.org
AKDN climate change programmes and institutions operate in multiple countries.

Climate Change

Increasing periods of drought, chronic water shortages and variations in temperature have been affecting people’s ability to feed themselves, raise livestock and produce adequate income. In areas where AKDN works, this problem has been compounded by terrain that is prone to natural disasters like flooding, avalanches and mudslides. Such disasters can destroy family and community assets in an instant, forcing some communities to migrate and relocate. It can also increase the pressure on land, which often results in conflict over natural resources. AKDN therefore takes an integrated approach to climate threats. It works with farmers and communities to adapt agriculture to new climatic conditions, create alternative livelihood opportunities, improve governance of natural resources and reduce risk to natural hazards. It also works to strengthen health and education systems in order to build overall community resilience.

Water

The World Bank reports that 40% of the world lacks clean water or sanitation. Climate change compounds this condition. AKDN works with communities to develop sustainable water supplies, sanitation and effective management of productive water resources.

In collaboration with its partners the AKDN has:

- **130 million**
  Planted more than 130 million trees in Asia and Africa.

- **17,000**
  Helped communities create over 17,000 Village Organisations.

Forestry

Trees fight climate change by storing carbon, regulating water flow and helping manage watersheds. For farming households, they provide food, fuel and fodder to improve livelihoods. They also stabilise slopes to reduce landslides and avalanches, ensuring safer communities.

Governance

To cope with climate change and disasters, village organisations coordinate with local, regional and national government to manage land, water and community assets. Better governance of these critical resources helps make communities more resilient to shocks.

Disaster-Risk Reduction

AKDN works to ensure that poor people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters; and that residents who do live in high-risk areas are able to cope with disasters in terms of preparedness and response.

Climate-Smart Agriculture

Rising temperatures and varying rainfall are causing reductions in agricultural yields. AKDN works with smallholder farmers on innovative cropping techniques and credit mechanisms to help offset the effects on their incomes and livelihoods.
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Adapting to Climate Change

Helping communities build resilience

For further information: Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), 1-3 Avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 909 7200; E-mail: info@akdn.org

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Cover page: The AKDN helps improve the quality of life through water and sanitation interventions in Gujarat, India. Photo credits: AKDN / Jean-Luc Ray, Lucas Cuervo Moura, Christopher Wilton-Steer.