

### Aga Khan Education Services





### Aga Khan Schools 2020













"I am sure that all of you here today will agree that we live in a time of rapid change - change that is often not predictable, and not always positive. The best way to manage change, whether positive or negative, is to anticipate it and prepare for it. On the basis of my experience with development as an observer and a practitioner - that now spans more than forty years - I have come to the conclusion that there is no greater form of preparation for change than education. I also think that there is no better investment that the individual, parents, and the nation can make than an investment in education of the highest possible quality."

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

Opening ceremony of the Aga Khan School, Osh, Kyrgyz Republic, 30 October 2002



### Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) 2020 Annual Publication.

This publication showcases some inspiring stories and successes of our staff, students and stakeholders against the backdrop of the challenges of the global pandemic experienced during 2020.

The year 2020 will be marked in history as the year in which a pandemic (COVID-19) fundamentally shook and challenged every aspect of human society across the globe. The education sector has not been spared.

The Aga Khan Schools and education programmes have also been affected by the pandemic. In response to government directives intended to contain the spread of COVID-19, all of our 199 Aga Khan schools and standalone pre-primary centres and 100+ supplementary education centres started closing in rapid succession between end-February and April. This impacted our 89,500+ students, 5,500+ staff and changed the regular interface between families and schools. Almost overnight our staff teams were called upon to establish alternate solutions to maintain meaningful learning continuity for our students. They have had to navigate digital technology and adapt quickly to new ways of teaching, whilst also managing the challenges of confinement themselves with their families. As a system, we have paid close attention to the duty of care and recognising the toll the pandemic is taking on the overarching wellbeing of all.

In spite of the difficulties, it has been deeply moving to witness and experience the tremendous good will and innovation that has flourished as the AKES staff continue to find creative ways to maintain learning for their students and keep morale high. Parents and families have joined hands with teachers in enabling this for their children. Collaboration across geographies has been strengthened. The AKES global teams have come closer together to support each other and to find solutions to new challenges.

We recognise that the reverberations of the pandemic continues into 2021 and we are yet to understand the far reaching implications that this pandemic will have on children's development, access to quality education, the profession of teaching and potential for profound paradigm shifts to teaching and learning.

On behalf of the AKES community, I am delighted to share some of the key highlights from 2020 which provide promise of hope for 2021 and the future.

Nimet Rener

Director, Aga Khan Education Services





## Aga Khan Education Services

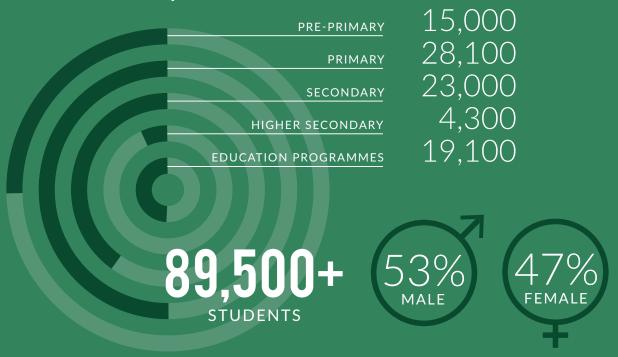
AKES is one of the largest private, not-for-profit pre-tertiary education networks in the developing world. The schools and education programmes are present in 13 countries across East Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East. AKES operates 199 schools and standalone pre-primary centres and 100+ centres offering non-formal programmes that reach 89,500+ pre-primary to higher secondary students, with the support of 5,500+ teachers and staff.

Established over 100 years ago, the Aga Khan Schools and programmes serve diverse populations. Over 75% of the schools are located in rural areas, with many operating in marginalised remote communities where access to quality education is limited.



agakhanschools.org features over 300 stories about our schools and students.

#### Student Population



#### Geography



#### A Global Network



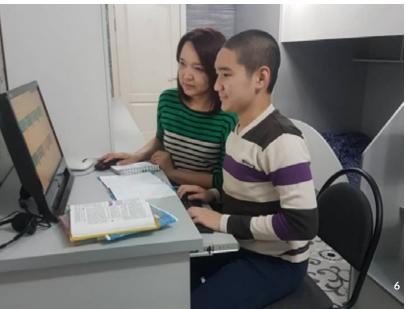


# Maintaining Education During COVID-19

In response to government directives to contain the spread of COVID-19 all AKES schools and non-formal programmes were closed, requiring a shift from physical teaching to remote learning. Our teachers and leaders innovated to find ways to provide education and maintain learning continuity for students, through online (including Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and Zoom) and offline modes (including television, mobile phones as well as project style study packs). A strong focus was placed on pastoral care and the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students, their family and staff.









#### Maintaining Education During COVID-19

#### INTERNET-FREE REMOTE LEARNING EXAMPLES

#### Afghanistan: English Language Home-Based Learning Programme

The Afghanistan team modified their programmes so that they could be delivered by phone. In partnership with the AKDN telecom company, Roshan, teachers distributed SIM cards and study packs to students. For English language programmes, they adopted the 'flipped learning' approach, where students pre-read lesson material independently, then come together with the teacher and their peers to participate in group activities designed to improve their English language skills.

#### Pakistan: Learning for All and Drop Everything and Read

In Northern Pakistan, where many students do not have internet access, several methods were created. Learning for All is a digital learning programme where lessons are broadcast through the local cable television service. Students with access to computers were given USB memory sticks containing recorded video lessons. Learning was further supported through the distribution of study packs with materials that enabled students to continue their learning at home. Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) was launched as a way of encouraging students to enhance literacy and continue reading. Teachers and volunteers distributed books from school libraries to students' homes; students kept a log of the books they read and shared book reviews with their teachers via WhatsApp.

100%

OF SCHOOLS ENABLED ACCESS TO MATERIALS IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN LEARNING CONTINUITY

Students were supported through online or offline forms or parental engagement. 9

ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS WERE PROVIDED WITH INTERNET IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURES

Internet connectivity was provided to nine additional schools in Northern Pakistan, resulting in internet access for 3,600+ students and 150+ teachers.

**21,000** 

STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN A READING PROGRAMME (DEAR -DROP EVERYTHING AND READ) IN PAKISTAN

Between March and August 2020, students read 62,000 books between them.







### **Our Teachers**

Aga Khan Schools and programmes are staffed by qualified teachers, dedicated to providing support for academic attainment, overall progress and wellbeing. Teachers engage in training and global professional learning communities. This year, teachers applied new pedagogical practices to navigate and leverage digital technology to continue to offer education to students. Adults and students have explicitly focused on metacognition and learning how to learn.

#### NATIONAL RECOGNITION

#### Best Pre-School Teacher of Tajikistan 2019

In January 2020, Angoma Atomamadova, a pre-primary teacher at the Khorog Park Early Childhood Development Centre in Tajikistan, won first place in the Ministry of Education and Science's annual contest. The contest identifies the best of the best among pre-primary teachers and has six rounds of assessment including demonstration lessons.

#### **Contribution to Education Community Award - Asian Education Awards**

Nutan Iyer, Principal of the Diamond Jubilee High School in Mumbai, India was awarded the Contribution to Education Community Award of the Asian Education Awards for her continuing excellence in education and school leadership.



OF STAFF ARE LOCAL

AKES is committed to supporting local recruitment, and only 1% of our staff are expatriates.

5,500+ 59%

**STAFF** 

AKES employs over 5,500 staff, of which over 4,000 (70%) work directly with students as teachers and school leaders.

**FEMALE STAFF** 

**AKES** encourages employment opportunities for women and 3.250 staff are female.

"The ripple effect that a teacher can have as he or she touches the lives of hundreds of students over the years provides a multiplier that even the sharpest businessman would envy."

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

Inauguration of the Professional Development Centre in Northern Areas, Pakistan, 19 October 2000

#### **TEACHERS - OUR BEACONS OF HOPE**

AKES India honoured teachers on national Teachers' Day in September with a variety of virtual celebrations across all of their schools and preschools. Students at one of the schools in Mumbai virtually performed a humorous play for their teachers entitled Teachers on Zoom. The play was an ode to all the challenges and mischief that teachers face during virtual lessons.



# Early Childhood Development and Pre-Primary Education

Research shows that high quality experiences in the early years are linked to positive outcomes associated with health, social and economic wellbeing as adults. AKES early childhood programmes provide ongoing training and support for teachers to facilitate the provision of safe, stimulating, and nurturing early learning environments for young children. Programmes serve children as young as 18 months.

#### REMOTE LEARNING FOR PRE-PRIMARY STUDENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Continuity of education during COVID-19 for pre-primary children amidst school closures reached families in rural and remote areas, as teachers connected with children and their families by phone and provided resource packs for children's learning.

In Afghanistan, in collaboration with AKDN telecom company Roshan, a home-based learning programme for 3-6 year olds was set up. Packages of sim cards, story books, activities and stationary were distributed to families; teachers worked in partnership with parents by phone to support children's engagement with exploratory learning. Even with the return of physical classes, these sessions will continue as a way to provide ongoing parental support.



### Early Childhood Development and Pre-Primary Education

"...the evidence accumulates steadily showing that an investment made in the earliest, pre-school years can bring enormous dividends as a child proceeds from one level of education to another."

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

Commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Madrasa programme, Mombasa, Kenya, 14 August 2007

**262** 

PRE-PRIMARY UNITS

AKES manages 262 preprimary units - 151 of these are in Pakistan and 73 are in Afghanistan. Most of these are in rural areas, where there is little other preprimary provision.

**17%** 

OF THE 89,500+ AKES STUDENTS ARE PRE-PRIMARY

15,000 students aged 18 months to 6 years are currently enrolled in preprimary programmes. 400

ADDITIONAL STUDENTS

400 additional pre-primary students joined our programmes this year in Tajikistan and Pakistan.

#### NATIONAL LEVEL PRESCHOOL AWARDS IN INDIA

AKES celebrates the pursuit of continuous improvement in the provision of high quality early childhood education with two Education World Preschool Grand Jury Awards 2019-20 for preschools in Gujarat, India. The Aga Khan Preschool in Ranavav was ranked ninth across India for Campus Design Excellence, whilst the Aga Khan Preschool in Botad was ranked seventh for Best Teaching Learning Resources.

#### FULL DAY PRE-PRIMARY (KINDERGARTEN) PROGRAMME INTRODUCED IN TAJIKISTAN

In Khorog, Tajikistan, supporting access to high quality education and meeting the needs of working parents included extending the existing half day programme to full day provision, thereby increasing demand for spaces by parents.

### Curriculum

Aga Khan Schools aspire to deliver an inclusive, academically rigorous and well-rounded curriculum that honours the context in which students live and their place as global citizens. Graduates from Aga Khan Schools are equipped with the knowledge they need to thrive throughout their adult lives, skills they need to be successful in an ever changing word, and attitude and values they need to be good and ethical adults and to shape a positive future for themselves and others.

#### AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION BOARD

37 Aga Khan Schools in Pakistan are affiliated with the Aga Khan University Examination Board (AKU-EB). The AKU-EB is a Pakistan-based examination and education system with three programmes: The Middle School Programme, the Secondary School Certificate and the Higher Secondary School Certificate. Together, these three programmes account for a student's instruction from Grade 6 up till and including Grade 12, after which they may pursue higher education. The curriculum is based on the Pakistan national curriculum and has an emphasis on concept based learning. AKES Pakistan is steadily transitioning all its schools towards affiliation with the AKU-EB, and the process takes five years in total.



"We must rise above the antiquated approaches of earlier days and instead infuse our students with what I would call three "A's" of modern learning - the spirit of anticipation, the spirit of adaptation and the spirit of adventure. This will happen best in learning environments which are both serious and focused on the one hand, but which are also joyous and inspiring places, operating on the cutting edge of pedagogy and knowledge."

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

Foundation stone-laying ceremony of the residential campus, Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa, Kenya, 14 August 2007

19

**EXAMINATION BOARDS** 

Aga Khan Schools are affiliated to a total of 19 examination boards of which 17 are national and state examination boards and 2 are international.

**37** 

SCHOOLS AFFILIATED WITH AKU-EB TO DATE

37 schools in Pakistan are affiliated with the Aga Khan University's Education Board since affiliation first began in 2009.

#### INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Schools in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Bangladesh offer the International Baccalaureate programme (IB) which fosters inquiry-based learning, and the Cambridge International Education (CIE) programme which offers a broad and balanced study across a wide range of subjects.

#### A NEW BEGINNING IN KABUL FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

In December 2020, AKES, Afghanistan, the Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan and the University of Central Asia signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a UCA School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) at an AKES Learning Centre in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Providing access to quality English language courses is a key priority for AKES Afghanistan and this partnership is an important step towards achieving that goal. Currently AKES learning centres offer Pre-A1 to B1 levels of English language courses (based on the Oxford and Cambridge English curricula).

The new partnership with UCA SPCE in Kabul will allow an extended offering of English language courses for students through the provision of advanced (B2+) English Language courses to learners. This will extend the English language learning journey of students, which will enable them to pursue further education and a range of employment opportunities.

### Co-Curriculum

Aga Khan Schools aim to enrich learning with a range of co-curriculum activities. Schools offer clubs and camps and many offer additional summer and winter holiday enrichment programmes. Robotics, coding and maker spaces are a part of the curriculum in Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan. This year, some co-curricular programmes were delivered remotely.

#### **HOME-BASED ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19**

#### Bangladesh: Extra-Curricular Programme

The Aga Khan School, Dhaka, provided students with a menu of activities that they could do at home. Activities included arts and crafts, music and dance, games, graphic design, coding and home-based service. As part of home-based service, students were encouraged to help their parents with chores and look after elderly family members in their homes.

#### India: Celebrating Yoga Day and Fathers' Day

This year International Yoga Day coincided with Father's Day, and the India team decided to celebrate both events with a week long programme promoting the benefits of yoga for wellbeing in daily life. Students and their fathers participated in online yoga classes, led by school PE teachers. Fathers appreciated the opportunity to bond with their children during this challenging time.

#### Kenya: Virtual Sports Day

The Aga Khan Nursery School, Mombasa turned their annual sports day into a virtual event. Teachers planned sports activities that could be done by children at home, mainly using recycled materials such as plastic water bottles, bottle tops and cereal boxes. Activities included making a pyramid using cups, bouncing a ball as many times as possible and having a balloon race. The day was a great success with family members getting involved.





#### Co-Curriculum

#### **HIGH ACHIEVERS**

#### **Bangladesh: Youth Achievement Award**

17 students achieved Gold in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

#### India: Leadership Development

Two students from the Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai, were selected to attend the International Peace Camp organised by Seeds of Peace in Maine, Boston, USA.

#### **Kyrgyz Republic: Olympiad Winners**

Two students from the Aga Khan School, Osh, won the regional and national Russian language and Biology Olympiads.

#### **Pakistan: Innovating Solutions**

Two students from the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Seenlasht, won the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge 2.0, which called for students to design solutions to improve education, employment and civic engagement on the theme of "Opening Doors, Knowledge and Skills for Empowered Youth".

#### **Tajikistan: Sporting Champions**

A student at the Aga Khan Lycée, Khorog, won a national and international tournament in boxing, whilst the school basketball team came third in a national competition, and two students won second place in a national badminton competition.

#### **Tanzania: Debating Pros**

For the third consecutive year, students from the Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School, Dar-es-Salaam, were selected to represent their country in the World Schools Debating Championships – an annual global English language debating tournament.

#### **Uganda: Storytelling Expert**

A student from the Aga Khan High School, Kampala, was the second runner up in the Vancouver Island University PechaKucha Contest. PechaKucha (the Japanese word for "chit chat") is form of storytelling using a presentation of 20 slides or images, with just 20 seconds for each slide.





### Graduates

Aga Khan Schools aim to do more than prepare young people for the world of work; they aim to equip students with the skills they need to become active, responsible and engaged citizens, with a commitment to lifelong learning. The pandemic has highlighted how learning to form clear and purposeful goals, work with others with different perspectives, find untapped opportunities and identify multiple solutions to big problems is becoming more and more essential.

#### AFGHANISTAN OPENS THE WAY FOR STUDENTS TO GO TO UNIVERSITY

#### **International English Language Testing System Preparation Course**

The 16 month International English Language Testing System (IELTS) preparation course is offered to help students to gain admission to local or international English-medium universities. One recent graduate obtained a scholarship to study at the American University of Afghanistan, whilst another has become an English teacher with AKES.

#### **University Entrance Exam Preparation - Kankor**

Every year, thousands of high school students across Afghanistan undertake the Kankor entrance exam to gain a place at a public university. AKES has designed a comprehensive Kankor preparation programme to support students with this endeavour. Some of the students supported are in remote areas of Badakhshan, where education facilities are limited and there are few other providers of Kankor preparation programmes.

#### PAKISTAN STUDENTS SECURE PLACES AT THE AGA KHAN UNIVERISTY'S MEDICAL COLLEGE

Nine students (six female and three male) from remote areas of Northern Pakistan have secured places on the Aga Khan University's prestigious five-year Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme. The students have graduated from AKES Higher Secondary Schools and will begin their medical course in March 2021.



85%

OF STUDENTS
GRADUATED SO FAR

Over 1,700 (85%) of 2,000 students have successfully completed their final year of schooling in Aga Khan Schools so far this academic year.

160+

STUDENTS HAVE BEEN AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS TO DATE

Students have received scholarships so far for undergraduate study. These include places at the Aga Khan University, the University of Central Asia, and universities in Russia.

30+

**COUNTRIES OF STUDY** 

Students with confirmed university places will be attending university in over 30 countries including their home countries and abroad. University destinations outside students' home countries include Columbia University in the USA, King's College London in the UK and the University of Waterloo in Canada.

AKES alumni make an impact across the world in their own communities and beyond, in small and larger enterprises.

#### **ALUMNI CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE**

In the past five years alone, more than 600 Pakistan graduates entered medical school, while another 300 entered nursing school. These healthcare professionals have been putting their lives on the line every day to treat patients affected by COVID-19.

Dr. Mehdi Irfani, a resident at the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi, Pakistan, graduated from the Aga Khan University in 2019, and is an alumnus of the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Gilgit. He recognises that "health practitioners are needed more than ever right now," and says "I want to play my part."

Jamila Bahar received her schooling from the Aga Khan Higher Secondary, Kuragh, after which she joined the nursing programme at the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi. As a recent nursing graduate, she has been on the frontline supporting patients through the outbreak of the virus. Jamila would like to specialise in mental health nursing.

Dr. Samiya Kamaluddin Musani, a former student of the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Karachi and currently a doctor at Civil Hospital, Karachi, has been practicing medicine for almost eight years. During the pandemic, she has found that many patients not only need medical care, but a lot of comfort and moral support in the face of a positive coronavirus diagnosis, given the fear around the disease. Dr. Musani says: "Medicine is the only profession for me. I was born to do this work."

# Service, Partnerships and Volunteers

Community service programmes are a fundamental part of the education of an Aga Khan student. These programmes extend beyond the classroom and equip students with essential skills that cannot be measured with a grade. Self-esteem, self-confidence, the importance of teamwork and cooperation are all qualities that are important in the development of ethical frameworks and dispositions to service in order to shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others.

#### **SERVICE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES DURING COVID-19**

#### India: Face Masks for Humanity

To help those unable to access face masks to keep themselves and their families safe, staff, parents and volunteers from the Aga Khan Preschools gave their time to make face masks and donated over 5,000 masks in the space of two weeks.

#### Kenya: Food Programme

To address food insecurity in relation to COVID-19, the Aga Khan School in Mombasa supported a charitable food programme run by Mombasa Cement which ran from May to October 2020. The programme was run on the school sports grounds and school staff and security supported with daily operations and health and safety. When the programme started, meals were provided to 300 members of the local community each day, and by August this number increased to 2,000.

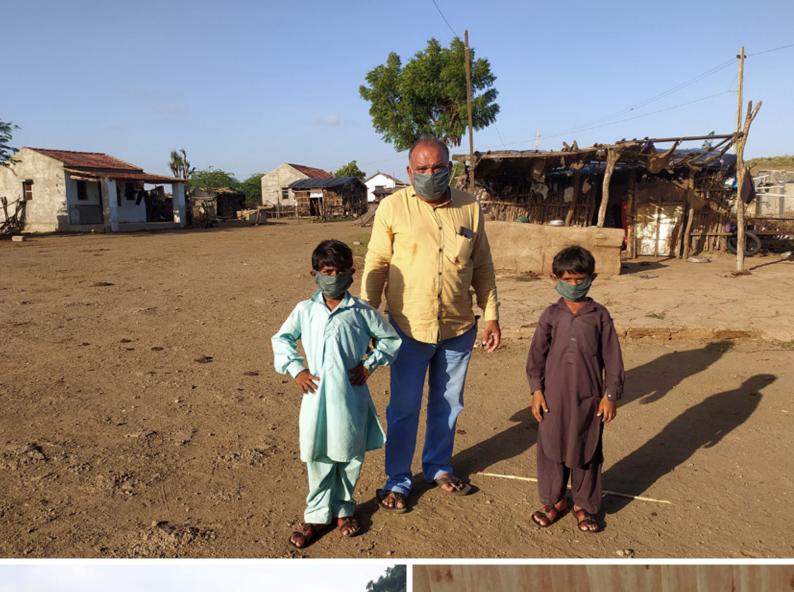
#### Tajikistan: Pancakes for Patients and Healthcare Workers

A generous student at the Aga Khan Lycée, Tajikistan, demonstrated compassion and made 300 pancakes, filled them with cherry jam, sweet and sour yogurt and donated them to patients and healthcare workers of Navobod village hospital in the Shugnan district of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) in Tajikistan.

"Socialising young people to see voluntary service as an important part of everyday life is the key, and providing models, opportunities, programmes and appropriate incentives are the means."

PRINCESS ZAHRA AGA KHAN

Conference of the International Association for Volunteer Effort, Edmonton, Canada, 25 August 1998







### **Environmental Focus**

Aga Khan students and staff are encouraged to be socially and environmentally conscious citizens who strive to make positive change in their schools and wider community. Students participate in a variety of environment-related education and curriculum activities, in addition to awareness raising initiatives.

#### CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

#### **Afghanistan: Pre-Primary Gardens**

The pre-primary team in Afghanistan set up gardens to grow plants, vegetables and fruit trees to engage students with learning about vegetation and caring for the environment. Both students and parents care for and maintain the garden making this a community initiative.

#### Bangladesh: ActionAid Rally

Students of the Aga Khan School, Dhaka, designed posters and stood with citizens around the world, as part of a rally with the NGO ActionAid (this took place prior to COVID-19).

#### **Kenya: World Environment Day**

The Aga Khan Nursery, Mombasa, responded to the theme 'Linking People to Mother Nature' to mark World Environment Day. Students chose to make toys using recycled materials and tidy and care for their local environment by litter picking and watering plants.

#### Pakistan: Urban Forest

An urban forest containing 150+ trees of 14 different species was planted at the Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan School in Karachi. The trees planted are all local to the region, including mulberry, almond, fig, lemon and tamarind.

Of special note: as part of the Education World Special Merit Awards 2020, the Aga Khan School, Chitravad, India, won an award for Ecology and Environment Awareness, due to its work with students and the local community.



#### Environmental Focus

"Climate change is a major threat to much of the developing world, and it needs to be looked at with great care."

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

3,000+

TREES PLANTED

The AKES community is committed to protecting the environment and this year has planted trees within and around school grounds and learning centres and in the local community.



### Buildings

Aga Khan Schools, hostels and non-formal programmes operate from a wide range of facilities in diverse locations. Our focus is on improving infrastructure to support the learning, health, safety and wellbeing of all beneficiaries, whilst focusing on environmentally sustainable design solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the core of our facilities upgrading philosophy is the use of local skills to provide economic benefits to the communities where our facilities are based.

#### INTERNATIONAL STANDARD ECD CENTRE IN ISHKASHIM, TAJIKISTAN

Our newly completed Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre in Ishkashim, Tajikistan opened in October 2020 and now allows 60+ of the very youngest community members in a rural part of Tajikistan to benefit from the education it provides. The expertise at this site will provide support to government centres and in the future, additional AKES centres.

The centre was designed by a local Architect and inspired by the design of Pamiri homes in the region, which have open areas with natural lighting and high ceilings. The construction was carried out using local skills and craftsmen, which is evident in the woodcraft finishes. The building satisfies all relevant international building codes and international best practice ECD design principles to provide a safe, fun and friendly environment for all users.





300+

**BUILDINGS** 

AKES provides services from over 300 buildings.

**7**HOSTELS

AKES has 5 hostels in Pakistan, 1 in India and 1 in Madagascar.

#### **GREEN BUILDINGS**

As part of our focus on the environment, AKES is working to ensure new facilities comply with the Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies (EDGE) green buildings certification system and globally conducting energy audits to identify where energy savings can be made. The immediate remedial measures will include the installation of sufficient thermal insulation, where applicable.

Construction for the Sherqilla Hostel, located in Gilgit, Pakistan, is well underway and due for completion in 2022. This facility will be the first AKES building in Pakistan that will conform to the EDGE Advanced level. For EDGE Advanced compliance, facilities must demonstrate a 20% reduction in annual water use, 20% reduction in embodied energy in materials and 40% reduction in annual energy use from normal practices. Working in conjunction with the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat these measures were introduced at the design phase.





"The most important thing a student can learn is the ability to keep on learning."

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

Foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy, Hyderabad, India, 22 September 2006

