



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2025 EDITION

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# 1. About The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)

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## 1.1. WHAT IS THE AGA KHAN FOUNDATION (AKF)

The Aga Khan Foundation is a 501(c)(3) registered, private, not-for-profit, non-denominational, leading global development organization working to tackle the root causes of poverty.

For more than 50 years, AKF has helped create strong community institutions that support sustainable, locally-driven initiatives to improve the lives of millions of people.

Rooted in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, our staff have unique insights into the complex challenges people face today as well as the opportunities for tomorrow. By combining local knowledge with global best practices, we strive to bring about transformative and long-lasting improvements to quality of life. Taking a generational approach, we have built the trust required to do this work even in the most fragile contexts.

AKF works alongside the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network – comprising hospitals, schools, universities, businesses, and climate and cultural programs around the world – it has access to a unique breadth of resources and in-depth know-how. Through partnerships with local communities, civil society, and businesses as well as governments and international aid agencies, it is working to expand opportunity for everyone.

**AKF is building a future where we all thrive together.**

## 1.2. WHAT TYPE OF FOUNDATION IS THE AKF?

The Foundation is primarily an implementing organization rather than a grant-making one. A significant portion of the funding for development activities comes from partnerships with national governments, multilateral institutions, and private sector partners. His Highness the Aga Khan provides regular funding for administration, new programs, country initiatives, and some core activities. The Ismaili community contributes invaluable volunteer time, professional services, and substantial financial resources. Other funding sources include income from user fees and endowment funds. Another major source of funding is donations from corporations and individuals worldwide, notably through fundraising activities held in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

## 1.3. WHEN WAS AKF ESTABLISHED?

AKF was established by His Highness the Aga Khan IV in Geneva in 1967 and has been in operation for over 55 years.

## 1.4. WHERE DOES AKF OPERATE?

AKF headquarters is based in Geneva and operates in about 18 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. The offices in the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom are primarily involved in advancing resource development and government and private partnerships.

## 2. The Aga Khan Foundation's Work and Impact

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### 2.1. WHAT ARE THE SEVEN THEMATIC AREAS OF AKF'S PROJECTS?

AKF leads a range of integrated, innovative, and gender-sensitive interventions in 7 thematic areas.

#### 2.1.1. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

##### **Laying the foundations for prosperous and sustainable farming and a hunger-free world.**

AKF works with men and women farmers across mountains, plains, and coastal areas to sustainably enhance agriculture, aquaculture, and livestock production and improve food and nutritional security and incomes. Alongside our partners and community organizations, we improve access to knowledge, skills, technology, low-cost agricultural inputs, and markets through integrated value chain development while ensuring that natural resources like soil, water, pasturelands, and forests are conserved and managed equitably. We also build and rehabilitate infrastructure to provide access to water, energy, and markets and conserve soil. We help thousands of farmers become climate resilient. Our programs benefit millions of people worldwide, including over 600,000 farmers practicing climate-smart agriculture

#### 2.1.2. CLIMATE RESILIENCE

##### **Supporting communities to address the challenges and opportunities of climate change and contribute to a healthy planet.**

AKF collaborates with communities to strengthen their resilience to climate change, so they not only survive but thrive. Our approach is founded on developing local understanding and ownership in combination with scientific knowledge and co-creating interventions for mitigation and adaptation, such as renewable energy, biodiversity promotion, sustainable water management, forest and mangrove regeneration, and soil sequestration. We are currently working with more than 600,000 farmers and helping them transition to regenerative agriculture and 12,000 local resource management institutions and each year, we plant millions of trees, restore 10,000s hectares of land and natural resources assets, and generate clean and reliable electricity for over 30,000 people. AKF is also preparing the next generation for the climate challenges by promoting climate education for children and youth.

#### 2.1.3. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT:

##### **Giving girls and boys the best possible start in life.**

AKF empowers caregivers, families, communities, health and education services, and institutions to create joyful, equitable, and sustainable Early Childhood Development environment for the holistic development and well-being of young children. We focus on enhancing caregiver, family, and community support, increasing access to quality ECD services, and strengthening ECD workforce and institutions. Our ECD programs annually benefit more than 2 million children (aged 0 – 6 years), over 1 million caregivers, and over 78,000 members of the ECD workforce.

#### 2.1.4. EDUCATION

**Enabling children and young people to learn, fulfill their potential, and interact effectively with the world.**

AKF works with teachers, students, parents, communities, and partners, including policy-makers, to equip girls and boys with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to build a better future and contribute to society. We focus on increasing access to quality learning opportunities by creating more enabling learning pathways for students, supporting more teachers and educators to be leaders, innovators, and active agents in education reform, and enhancing more transformative, equitable, and inclusive education systems for all. AKF programs currently benefit nearly 1 million learners and 27,000 teachers at over 3,500 government and community schools.

**2.1.5. CIVIL SOCIETY**

**Strengthening inclusive communities built on shared values and collective action.**

Successful communities need vibrant local networks, resilient institutions, and people ready to engage and contribute. AKF works with civil society groups to strengthen values-based societies, enhance civic institutions, and increase the participation of all people. Our civil society partners design and implement activities across AKF's thematic areas, ensuring their responsiveness to community needs and aspirations. Globally, we have long-term partnerships with over 50,000 civil society organizations (around 40% women-led), which, in turn, serve more than 10 million people.

**2.1.6. HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

**Enabling individuals and communities to optimize their health and well-being and live life to the fullest.**

AKF works with households, communities, governments, and our partner network to enable people to be healthy and stay healthy: especially women of childbearing age, vulnerable children under five, and adolescents navigating the complex pathway to adulthood. We focus on strengthening population and community health, addressing health and nutrition inequalities, and improving access to, and utilization of, integrated health services, while also addressing the broader determinants that impact health and nutrition outcomes. Worldwide, AKF currently supports health and nutrition and water and sanitation programs and services that reach over 8 million people.

**2.1.7. WORK AND ENTERPRISE**

**Empowering people—especially the young—to access opportunities and create sustainable, prosperous futures.**

AKF works with our wide network of partners to help communities tackle economic exclusion and unemployment and improve the economic well-being of women and men, particularly youth. We focus our support on promoting in-demand, future-facing skills and work opportunities while promoting local entrepreneurship and SMEs through training, mentoring, and access to finance. Our flagship enterprise development initiative Accelerate Prosperity has already boosted more than 3,400 small and growing businesses, while our employable skills program and Future of Work initiative - which seeks to prepare youth for digital and green jobs - is benefiting more than 20,000 individuals per year, over half of whom are women.

## **2.2. WHAT ARE AKF'S PROGRAMMATIC GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF FOCUS?**

The majority of AKF's activities are concentrated in rural communities in mountainous, coastal, and other remote, resource-poor areas. While critical work continues in rural contexts, we have increasingly expanded our programming to include issues of globalization, migration, climate change, and the challenges faced by migrant communities in urban contexts.

AKF mainly operates in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, Portugal, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

## **2.3. WHICH US-BASED GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE AGENCIES PARTNER WITH AKF USA?**

AKF partners with many agencies from bi-lateral and multilateral agencies as well as banks and philanthropic agencies.

## **2.4. HOW DOES AKF LEARN FROM AND EVALUATE THE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS IT SUPPORTS?**

Gathering data on the scale, scope, and impact of our programming is an integral part of our efforts to assess, understand our footprint, and improve our approaches. Within each project, data is collected to understand the extent to which targets have been met, how communities are experiencing improvements in their lives, and how programs can evolve to become even more effective.

While adapting approaches to local contexts, we make efforts to apply a standard set of global indicators to track change and trends over time. When it comes to data management and analysis, we increasingly leverage digital tools such as Salesforce. Evidence generated from results data is shared with partners, communities, and other key stakeholders such as governments and civil society. Insights drawn from the data help to inform decision-making, not only internally, for our programming, but also among policymakers and other local actors.

## **2.5. WHY SHOULD ANYONE SUPPORT AKF?**

- 2.5.1.** AKF focuses on improving the quality of life of people in need, regardless of race, origin, faith, or gender.
- 2.5.2.** AKF provides much more than goods or services; AKF is committed to making long-term investments anchored at the local level because we understand that breaking the cycle of poverty is a complex issue.
- 2.5.3.** AKF employs a multi-faceted approach, leading a range of integrated, innovative, and gender-sensitive interventions in 7 thematic areas: agriculture and food security, climate resilience, early childhood development, education, civil society, health and nutrition, work and enterprise.
- 2.5.4.** AKF ensures interventions are informed by evidence, data, local knowledge, and extensive networks of community-led institutions making our programs locally-led and community-driven to teach self-reliance and independence.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 2.5.5.** AKF coordinates its' activities not only with those of other Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies but also with local, national, and international partners to bring to bear a full package of multiple activities that can spark a long-term process of positive and sustainable change.
- 2.5.6.** AKF is committed to delivering high standards and bringing innovation to the people we serve.
- 2.5.7.** AKF operates in rural and urban contexts but focuses on communities in mountainous, coastal, and other remote, resource-poor areas, where other agencies have not always been able to operate. AKF has developed the expertise and know-how over the last 5 decades because it has stayed and operated in countries even when situations became tough.
- 2.5.8.** AKF employs a unique approach to economic, cultural, and social development through continued learning and evaluation that helps ensure every commitment to every project has an impact today as well as for generations to come.
- 2.5.9.** AKF USA has a 4-star rating on Charity Navigator which means you can have confidence in our work and how donations are being utilized.
- 2.5.10.** 100% of donations received by AKF go directly to the programs and people it serves. The operating costs are managed through direct support from the Ismaili Imam (the office of His Highness the Aga Khan) and income from user fees and endowment funds.

## 3. About the Aga Khan Foundation's Leadership

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### 3.1. WHO IS HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN?

His Highness the Aga Khan IV was the founder of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and the 49th hereditary Imam (Spiritual Leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. His Highness the Aga Khan V is now the Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) including the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the 50th hereditary Imam (Spiritual Leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. In Islam's ethical tradition, religious leaders not only interpret the faith but also have a responsibility to help improve the quality of life in their community and in the societies in which they live.

As a descendant of the Fatimids, the Egypt-based dynasty that founded Cairo and ruled much of North Africa and the Middle East from the 10th through the 12th centuries, the Aga Khan retains the hereditary title of "Prince". The title of "Aga Khan" dates to 1818, when Hassan Ali Shah, the 46th Ismaili Imam, was granted the honorary hereditary title of "Aga Khan" by the Shah of Persia. The title "His Highness" was granted to Aga Khan IV by Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain in 1957 and to Aga Khan V by His Majesty King Charles of Great Britain in 2025.

### 3.2. WHO IS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

His Highness the Aga Khan V (Chairman)

Prince Amyn Aga Khan

Princess Zahra Aga Khan  
Jane Piacentini-Moore  
Alan Abela

## 4. About the Aga Khan Foundation USA

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### 4.1. WHEN WAS AKF USA ESTABLISHED, AND WHERE IS THE OFFICE LOCATED?

AKF USA was established in 1981. The office is in Washington D.C. *The address is in the contact section below.*

### 4.2. WHAT IS AKF USA'S GOVERNANCE?

AKF USA is governed by a National Committee appointed by the Board in consultation with the General Manager and CEO leadership. The National Committee is responsible for providing directional oversight and works closely with the CEO, staff, and volunteer leadership.

### 4.3. HOW MANY STAFF MEMBERS WORK FOR AKF USA?

The AKF USA team is lean with about 25-30 staff, working in the areas of Resource Development and Communications, Planned and Legacy Giving, Programs and Partnerships, Administration, Human Resources, Finance, and Information Technology. Several support functions are shared with our Canadian AKF office. This helps keep the overall administrative costs low.

### 4.4. HOW DO VOLUNTEERS WORK WITH AKF USA?

AKF USA has a robust and highly structured volunteer network that spans the country, organized into 7 regions. Each regional team is led by a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson (RCVC) to support the work of Resource Development (Individual Giving) and a Regional PLG Leader and Deputy PLG Leader to support the work of Planned and Legacy Giving (PLG). The regional leaders work closely with National Committee members and office staff to implement orientation and training sessions, fundraising campaigns, and events that are aligned with AKF USA's priorities. At any given time, a regional team can have 28-150 volunteers. There is a National Advisory Team of volunteers that specifically supports PLG work.

### 4.5. HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A VOLUNTEER FOR AKF USA?

Anyone with a shared interest in the mission to end global poverty can email their contact information and area of interest to: [rd.akfusa@akdn.org](mailto:rd.akfusa@akdn.org) or their [Regional Volunteer Leadership](#). Anyone who wishes to become a volunteer with the PLG program team may email: [legacy.akfusa@akdn.org](mailto:legacy.akfusa@akdn.org)

### 4.6. WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO DONATE TO AKF USA?

**There are many ways to donate:**

1. Online at any time.



2. Join the iHope Program to make automated monthly gifts.
3. Request a Tribute Page in honor of a special occasion or person.
4. Create your legacy with AKF through a planned gift.
5. Wire transfers.
6. Stock gifts.
7. Find out if your donation can be matched by your corporate employer.

We have a '[Search For Your Employer](#)' feature on the '[Ways to Donate](#)' page of our website, that allows you to find out whether your employer will match your donation and double the impact of your gift.

#### 4.7. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT AKF'S WORK?

There are several ways to stay connected to AKF USA:

- Visit our website: [akf.org](http://akf.org) and [akfusa.org](http://akfusa.org)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#).
- Sign up for our [monthly newsletter](#) or email: [rd.akfusa@akdn.org](mailto:rd.akfusa@akdn.org)
- Sign up for the [FREE Learning Hub](#) platform which has numerous learning modules across many of our thematic areas.

## 5. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)

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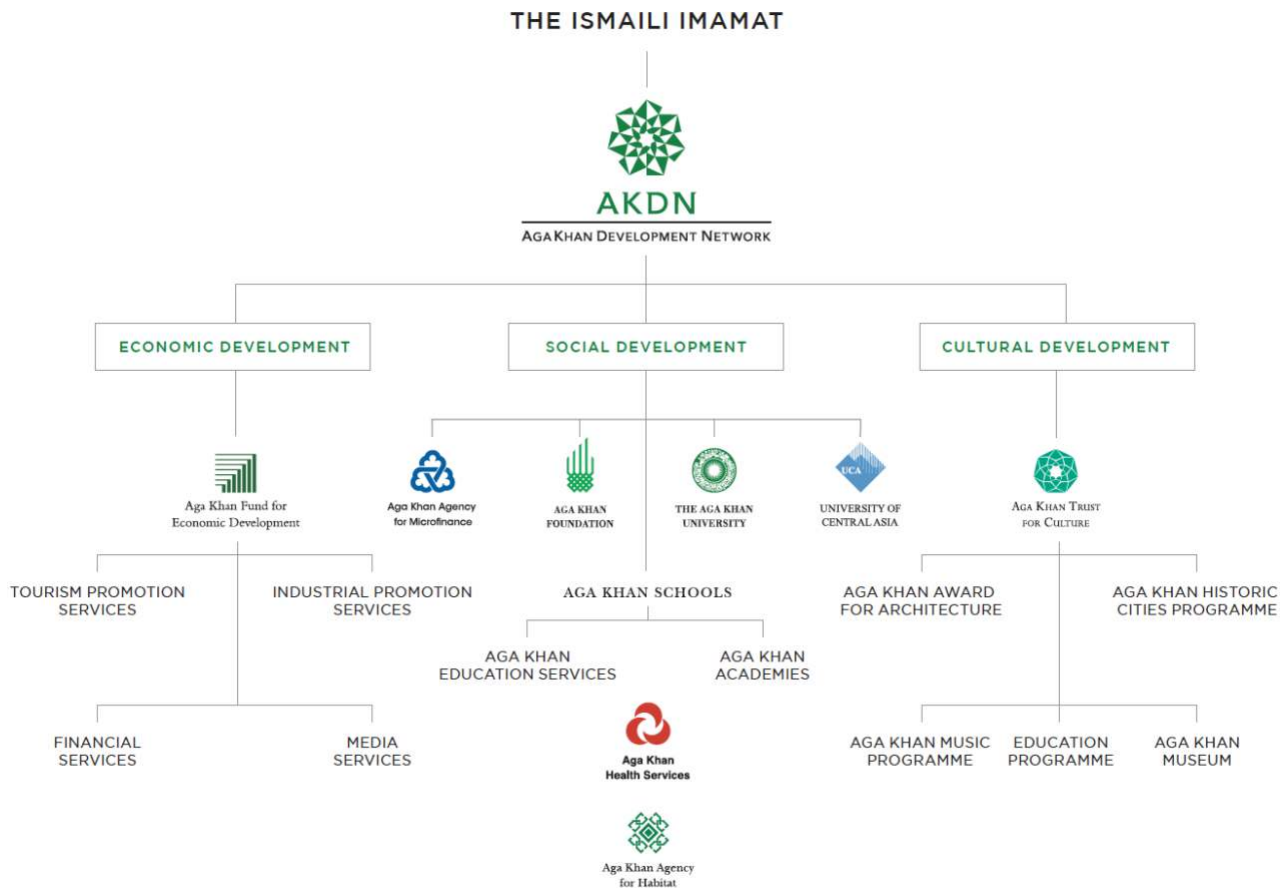
#### 5.1. HOW IS AKF CONNECTED TO THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK?

The Aga Khan Foundation is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network.

#### 5.2. WHAT IS THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK?

The [Aga Khan Development Network](#) (AKDN) is dedicated to improving the quality of life of those in need, mainly in Asia and Africa, irrespective of their origin, faith, or gender. AKDN uses a unique multifaceted approach to development that aims to help communities and individuals become self-reliant.

AKDN's agencies are private, international, and non-denominational development organizations. They work to improve the welfare and prospects of people in the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa. Some programs, such as specific research, education, and cultural programs, span both the developed and developing worlds. While each agency pursues its own mandate, all of them work together within the overarching framework of the Network so that their different pursuits interact and reinforce one another.



**5.3. ARE AKDN AND ITS AGENCIES RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS?**

No. AKDN's work is underpinned by the ethical principles of Islam - particularly consultation, solidarity with those less fortunate, self-reliance, and human dignity - but we do not restrict our work to a particular community, country, or region. AKDN's focus is on poor areas of the developing world, but we also conduct education and public affairs programs in North America and Europe. Pluralism is a central pillar of AKDN's ethical framework; we aim to improve living conditions and opportunities for people regardless of their religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. Our employees are also of different faiths, origins, and backgrounds.

**5.4. WHERE DO AKDN'S AGENCIES OBTAIN THEIR FUNDING?**

A significant portion of the funding for development activities comes from partnerships with national governments, multilateral institutions, and private sector partners. His Highness the Aga Khan provides regular funding for administration, new programs and country initiatives, and some core activities. The Ismaili community contributes invaluable volunteer time, professional services, and substantial financial resources. Other funding sources include income from user fees and endowment funds.

Another significant source of funding is in the form of donations from corporations and individuals around the world, notably through fundraising activities, held in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The Aga Khan Foundation affiliates in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Portugal are all registered non-profit organizations in their respective countries.

The project companies of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED)—the only development agency in the AKDN that works on a commercial basis—operate as businesses, but all surpluses are reinvested in further development initiatives, including contributions to social and cultural projects. AKFED also works closely with governments, private sector partners, and multilateral institutions to co-finance major infrastructure projects such as the Roshan mobile phone network in Afghanistan and the Bujagali hydroelectric project in Uganda.

#### **5.5. DOES AKF WORK ONLY FOR THE ISMAILI COMMUNITY?**

No. Several AKDN agencies were first established to meet the needs of the Ismaili community in South Asia and East Africa, but today, under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan, the Network's institutions have grown beyond that mission to encompass projects in areas where there are many faiths and ethnicities and where Ismailis do not live. The programs, when at full scale, typically benefit a wide cross-section of the population. There are many areas - in Egypt, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Mali, for example - where major programs serve populations in which the Ismaili community is not present.

#### **5.6. WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHIC AND PROGRAMMATIC SCOPE OF AKDN?**

Nine development agencies work in concert, operating 1,000 programs and institutions, some over 100 years old, in over 30 countries. The Network is privileged to have strong partnerships with governments, foundations, civil society organizations, and companies.

#### **5.7. WHAT IS THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE AGENCIES OF THE AKDN?**

AKDN works primarily through agencies that are registered in Switzerland as non-profit institutions.

The Aga Khan University (AKU) is chartered by the Government of Pakistan as an international university with the authority to operate programs, branches, and campuses anywhere in the world.

The University of Central Asia (UCA) is a self-governing regional university whose Charter was established under an international treaty between Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Ismaili Imam.

The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) is incorporated as a for-profit development agency under Swiss law, but its project companies operate as commercial entities under the laws of the countries in which they are resident.

## **6. Contact Information**

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### **Aga Khan Foundation**

1825 K Street, NW, #901

Washington, DC 20006, USA



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**FAX:** +1 (202) 7851752

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AKFUSA Invoices	<a href="mailto:akfusa.invoices@akdn.org">akfusa.invoices@akdn.org</a>
AKF Resource Development	<a href="mailto:rd.akfusa@akdn.org">rd.akfusa@akdn.org</a>
AKF Communications	<a href="mailto:communications.akfusa@akdn.org">communications.akfusa@akdn.org</a>
AKF Information	<a href="mailto:info.akfusa@akdn.org">info.akfusa@akdn.org</a>
AKF Planned and Legacy Giving	<a href="mailto:legacy.akfusa@akdn.org">legacy.akfusa@akdn.org</a>
AKF Safeguarding	<a href="mailto:gustavo.velasco@akdn.org">gustavo.velasco@akdn.org</a> <a href="mailto:kristie.kelly@akdn.org">kristie.kelly@akdn.org</a>