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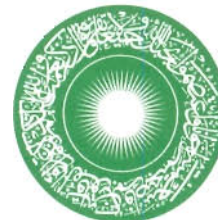
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AKU's 16th Convocation Government for Reforms in Education Sector – Prime Minister Aga Khan Stresses Need to Mitigate ‘Clash of Ignorance’



His Highness the Aga Khan, Chancellor of AKU, declaring the 16th AKU Convocation open. L to R (front row): Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of AKU; Dr. Ishratul Ebad, Governor of Sindh; Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, Prime Minister of Pakistan; Sardar Ali Mohammad Khan Mahar, Chief Minister of Sindh; and Shams Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU.

"The government has convincingly shown that it is committed to upgrading and reforming the education sector, because, among other things, it is critical to Pakistan's economic and social development." These words of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, reverberated across the impressive 16th AKU convocation ceremony held on December 6, 2003.

Recognising AKU as an important "dialogue partner", the Prime Minister noted the significance of the University's growing international role and its support for Pakistan's burgeoning opportunities for opening channels of trade and humanitarian support within the region. The Prime Minister added that "Aga Khan University has now carried Pakistan's flag beyond our borders, answering calls for help and assistance from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda." He said the University's teaching sites have been established in East Africa where teachers and educators, doctors and nurses and the people of the region are going to benefit from new health and education programmes that were developed, tested and fine-tuned in Pakistan. "Indeed the establishment of a new Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Karachi, and the offering of high quality general education, will be an important step in filling a critical gap in our higher education programmes," the Prime Minister remarked.

The Chancellor of AKU, His Highness the Aga Khan presided over the ceremony, and the gathering of over 3,000 included the Governor and Chief Minister of Sindh, ministers and

secretaries, Chairman and members of AKU's Board of Trustees, Syrian Minister for Education, senior government officials, diplomats, as well as academicians, donors, prominent citizens and the University's faculty, students and their proud parents.

The occasion marked the graduation of 240 doctors, nurses and school teachers. Graduates also included 17 from Afghanistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and USA. Seventy-nine students graduated from the University's MBBS programme and 114 from its Nursing programmes, including the initial batch of Master of Science in Nursing – the first in

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Annual National Health Sciences Research Symposium on Mental Health

Mental health problems, afflicting more than 450 million people worldwide, are on the rise. The World Health Organization estimates that if the present global trend continues, depression could become the second most common disorder causing disability and distress by the year 2020. These estimates have serious implications for developing countries such as Pakistan, where health, and especially mental health, is seriously under-resourced and largely ignored.

To propel the importance of mental health onto the national agenda, the theme for AKU's annual Health Sciences Research Symposium held in September 2003, therefore was 'Mental Health - Understanding the Challenges'. During this two-day landmark event, distinguished national and international experts, scholars, academicians and health policy-makers from Pakistan, Thailand, Switzerland, USA and UK covered issues such as de-stigmatization, child mental health, drug abuse, suicide prevention, mood disorders and religious superstitions in Muslim communities. Chief guest on the occasion, Ambassador Saidullah Khan



Dr. Murad Moosa Khan (first from left), Chair, Department of Psychiatry, AKU, moderating the question-and-answer session during the National Health Sciences Research Symposium on mental health.

Dehlavi, Chairman, Board of Trustees of AKU, expressed the hope that through its annual National Health Sciences Research Symposia, the "University can serve as a platform to collect the latest advances, to learn from each other and to make an impact on the developing world." In his opening remarks, Dr. Murad Moosa Khan, Chair, Department of Psychiatry, AKU, provided estimates for Pakistan, showing extremely high figures for depression and other mental disorders. These were far more elevated than other developing countries with similar socio-economic conditions.

Dr. Khan noted that this problem was compounded by factors such as a psychiatrist-population ratio of around one psychiatrist to a million people, discrimination, stigma, ignorance and an acute lack of treatment facilities. He also highlighted that "in order to be effective, solutions would need to be culturally relevant, cost effective, replicable and sustainable." In his keynote address, Dr. Benedetto Saraceno,

Director, Mental Health Division, World Health Organization, emphasised that "most mental, brain and substance-use disorders can be managed effectively with medication and/or psychosocial interventions." Describing mental ill health as a growing burden representing a major challenge to global development, Dr. Saraceno recommended urgent action to overcome barriers such as stigma and a lack of skills at the primary health care level, which prevent people from receiving appropriate care.

Speakers covered numerous areas in their presentations and lectures. Dr. Eli Breger, Life Fellow, American Academy of Child and Adolescence Psychiatry, International Relations Committee, South Carolina, USA, described the effects of armed conflicts on child mental health in the global perspective. He noted that around one-third of the world's refugee children, estimated to be at least five million, were in settings outside their countries, and 12 million remained homeless in their own countries. "With limited hope of uniting with their families, the children are forced into renegade military factions, trained in ways of combat, often under the influence of drugs," he explained. Meanwhile, Dr. Ambreen Ahmad, a psychiatrist from South Carolina, USA, analysed the effects of gender differences and gender bias in both patients and mental health providers as revealed through the treatment process.

Dr. Hashim Reza from Orpington Hospital, UK, speaking on religious superstitions in the context of mental health, said that religion impacts mental health services by shaping attitudes of the general public and those of professionals. "These attitudes have thus far varied from mutual antipathy to open hostility and various shades in between," he said. He explained how most commonly held superstitions are explainable in terms of local traditions and customs, and highlighted the need for public education with the objective of dispelling such superstitions. Dr. Abul Faizi, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, AKU, gave a clinical and socio-cultural perspective of drug addiction in Pakistan. He informed that according to conservative estimates, there were over four million drug addicts in Pakistan. Other invited speakers included Dr. Philip Thomas, Consultant Psychiatrist and Senior Research Fellow at Bradford University, UK, who gave two presentations on 'Culture and Mental Health' and 'Globalization and Mental Health', and Professor Teepu Siddique from North Western University, Chicago, USA, who spoke on 'Neurobiology and Mental Health'.

The Symposium was followed by a one-day workshop for training lay counsellors for counselling depressed and anxious women in urban and rural communities. In addition, there was a four-day laboratory-based workshop on molecular and analytical techniques for researchers involved in the field of mental health, wishing to familiarise themselves with basic, analytical and clinical research methods. ■

AKU Examination Board - the First in Private Sector

High Quality Examination Board Based on National Curriculum for Secondary and Higher Education



L to R: Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman, Board of Trustees of AKU; Her Excellency Nancy Powell, US Ambassador to Pakistan; Honourable Zobaida Jalal, Federal Minister for Education; and Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU, at the signing ceremony of the cooperative agreement between AKU and USAID.

In view of requests received from several schools in the private sector, and after careful examination of the nature and effects of the current examination system in Pakistan, AKU established an examination board - the first in the private sector, in November 2002. The Ordinance establishing the AKU Examination Board (AKU-EB) was approved by the Government of Pakistan, and provides for full credit and recognition in Pakistan for the certificates awarded by AKU-EB. The establishment of AKU-EB offers an alternative to the examination boards in the public sector, and is in accordance with the government's policy to introduce an independent examining body through public-private partnership.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as part of Educational System Reforms and consistent with the public-private policy of government of Pakistan, showed considerable interest in the objectives of AKU-EB. The USAID approved funding of US\$ 4.5 million for infrastructure development and operations for the Board's initial three years. This has laid the foundation for future external and internal financial support that will be necessary to ensure continuity.

At the signing ceremony of the cooperative agreement between AKU and USAID, held in August 2003, Federal Minister for Education, Zobaida Jalal referred to the initiation of the AKU-EB as a landmark for Pakistan's education system and said "The AKU Examination Board, being a pioneer, has a great deal of responsibility for attaining the milestones of quality, technology and public service (expected of it)." Echoing similar sentiments, US Ambassador to Pakistan, Nancy Powell, said, "Aga Khan University has a unique capability to develop and operate an independent examination board. It is a chartered university in Pakistan with a world class international reputation."

President Kassim-Lakha expressed the hope that the Examination Board, "by providing students, teachers and parents an alternative to the current examination system will also act as a role model and a benchmark for quality enhancement throughout the country." USAID Country

Director, Mark Ward and Chairman of AKU Board of Trustees, Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi also attended the ceremony.

Over the years, students, teachers, parents and educators in Pakistan have been seeking a reliable system of examinations for secondary and higher secondary education. The Secondary School Certificate (SSC), taken at grades 9 and 10, is a terminal qualification for most school-leavers who then search for employment. It is also a basis for admission to higher secondary (intermediate) education, grades 11 and 12, leading to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). High scores in the HSC enable selection to most sought-after professional colleges and jobs; therefore the stakes in the examinations for those aspiring to higher education and professional careers are very high.

Numerous schools had requested that AKU consider the provision of an alternative option to the examinations of the board of secondary and intermediate education in Pakistan than the far less affordable British examination system. AKU undertook a feasibility study in 1998-99, which carefully examined the nature and effects of the current public examinations system.

The study showed that while the objectives of the national curriculum were appropriate for SSC and HSC, the examinations assessed recall of prescribed texts rather than attainment of the curricular objectives. Since schools and parents judge academic performance by students' scores and, consequentially, access to higher education and future earning capacity, schools and colleges emphasise rote learning, largely neglecting the importance of understanding concepts and applying knowledge. This mode of learning had been carried upstream into higher education and downstream into primary education. The repetitious nature of the examinations and high stakes in the scores encouraged plagiarism and corruption and contributed to an overall decline in the quality of education. Preparation for the UK Boards' equivalent General Certificate of Education 'O' and 'A' level examinations conducted in Pakistan was

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AKU Faculty and Staff Circle the Globe in 2003



At the Seventh Annual Meeting of the International Association of Medical Science Educators held in July at Georgetown University School of Medicine, Washington D.C., USA, Dr. Jamsheer Talati, Associate Dean, Education, and Zexes Spencer, Associate Editor, Journal of Democracy, were facilitators for a session on 'Medical Faculty's Responsibility to Society and Social Order'.



Professor Riaz Qureshi, Chair, Department of Family Medicine, delivered two lectures on 'Low Back Pain in Clinical Practice' and 'Stress and its Management in Doctors and Patients' at a Family Medicine Conference organised by the Ministry of Health, Sharjah, UAE, in September.



In September, Dr. Rozina Karmaliani (BScN, '91), Assistant Professor and Director of BScN Degree Programme, AKU-SON, spoke on Capacity Building Initiatives for Nurses in Afghanistan and Possible Partnership Avenues with AKHS in Pakistan and in the Region', at the Third Health Development Forum held in Istanbul, Turkey.



Professor Laetitia J. King, Regional Director, ANS Programme East Africa, delivered a keynote presentation on 'The Challenges of Inter-country and Inter-Continental Collaboration in Education and Research in Health Related Fields' at the Collaborative Conversations Conference hosted by the Institute of Health & Community Studies, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom in September.



Dr. Shahnaz Ibrahim, Associate Professor, Department of Paediatrics, spoke on 'Childhood Psychomotor Retardation and Developmental Regression' at the Second Scientific Conference of the Paediatric Association of SAARC countries and Seventh Annual Scientific Conference of the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in September.



In July, Dr. Razia Fakir Mohammad, Senior Instructor, AKU-IED, gave a talk on 'A Co-Learning Partnership in Mathematics in Lower Secondary Classroom: Theory into Practice', at the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education Conference in Hawaii, USA.



Azra Naseem, Instructor, AKU-IED, conducted a week-long workshop on 'Integrating Technology into the Curriculum' in August in Dhaka, Bangladesh, organised by the International Academic Partnership of Aga Khan Education Service, Phillips Academy, the Schule Schloss Salem and AKU-IED.



At the Lifelong Citizenship Learning, Participatory Democracy and Social Change - 2003 Conference in Toronto, Canada, in October, Al-Karim Dattoo, Instructor, AKU-IED, gave a presentation on 'Null and Implicit Curricula and Citizenship Education in Pakistan'. ■

AKU Alumnus Appointed Section Head



Dr. Azam Ali was appointed Head of Ophthalmology, Department of Surgery, in September 2003, becoming the first AKU Medical College alumnus to achieve this position in the University.

Dr. Azam Ali graduated with multiple honours and scholarships with the first MBBS batch of AKU in 1988. He was one of the first recipients of the Salimah Aga Khan

and Faculty Development Awards. After receiving his initial Ophthalmology training at AKU, he proceeded for advanced training at some of the best institutions in the UK. He passed his Fellowship examinations from all three UK Royal Colleges.

He returned to AKU in 1999. Since then he has instituted state-of-the-art cataract and retinal surgery at the Hospital and has gained recognition both in the country and abroad for his contributions. Dr. Azam Ali has also consistently remained involved in the transfer of knowledge and skills, delivering numerous lectures and conducting many workshops within the country and abroad. ■

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

February - May 2004

Programme	Date
Continuing Medical Education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seminar on Common Medical Problems ■ Workshop on Tuberculosis ■ Seminar on Family Medicine ■ Workshop on Enteric Fever 	Feb 24 - 26 Mar 30 - 31 April 27 - 29 May 25 - 26
'Signs, Symptoms and Care' - Public Health Awareness Programme	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Psychiatry ■ Screening for gynaecological cancers: (importance of well women clinics) ■ Meningitis 	Mar 6 Apr 3 May 1

First Pakistani Dean of Medical College



Professor Dr. Mohammad Khurshid became the first Pakistani Dean of the Medical College in August 2003.

On his appointment to this position, Dr. Khurshid said: "I am honored and grateful for the trust reposed in me for this appointment by the staff, University administration and the Board of Trustees. AKU will continue to be a leading university in Pakistan and this region and I hope to contribute towards

this goal, specifically the Medical College which would continue to be recognised for its service, education and research activities and the accomplishments of its faculty."

Dr. Khurshid joined AKU as an Associate Professor, Pathology and Medicine, becoming Chairman, Department of Pathology, in 1985. Professor Khurshid was promoted to the position of Medical Director and Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs, in 2000. He has worked extensively in the field of haematology, particularly leukaemia.

Dr. Khurshid has also played a leadership role in curriculum development both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He combines strong academic credentials, a fine reputation as an educator and clinician with extensive administrative experience. Dr. Khurshid is also a member of the European Haematology Association and the International Society of Haematology (Asian-Pacific Division). In 2003, the Government of Pakistan conferred on him the prestigious Civil Award of Pride of Performance. ■

AKU Examination Board

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At the Signing Ceremony of Cooperative Agreement between AKU and USAID (L to R): Her Excellency Nancy Powell, US Ambassador to Pakistan; Honourable Zobaida Jalal, Federal Minister for Education; and Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, AKU President.

noticeably different and preferred by those who could afford the cost. Consequently, the number of candidates for these examinations had increased five fold in the preceding decade.

The feasibility study concluded that continued indifference to the understanding of concepts and application of knowledge is detrimental to the development of individuals and societies. It therefore recommended the creation of a school examination service to the Board of Trustees of the University. The Board approved the recommendation, subject to approval by the Government of Pakistan and initial external funding until revenue from examination fees could cover the cost of operations. Government approval was obtained in the form of an ordinance establishing the AKU Examination Board (AKU-EB), in November 2002. The ordinance provided full credit and recognition in Pakistan of the certificates awarded for achievement up to the higher secondary level of education or its equivalent. It provided the option of AKU-EB examinations to government

schools in Federal Administered Territories and cantonments as well as private candidates and students in non-government schools in Pakistan. The ordinance also recorded that AKU-EB may expand its services to government schools in the provinces, subject to approval by the provincial governments, as well as abroad.

The goals of the AKU-EB are to promote improvement of the quality of education in schools through examinations for the SSC and HSC, training of teachers, and development of supplementary materials; to design and offer high quality public examinations based on the national curriculum for secondary and higher secondary education; and to promote the development of expertise in educational assessment and tests in Pakistan. The AKU-EB will offer high quality examinations, conforming to international standards, in English and Urdu to affiliated government and non-government schools, at an affordable cost. Schools will be encouraged to support a system of evaluation that emphasises comprehension, logical thinking and problem solving. Examinations will require understanding and application of knowledge and skills rather than regurgitation of information. The AKU-EB will provide reliable assessments with predictive value for gauging the attainment of the objectives of the national curriculum. It will serve the purposes of certification of competences for school-leavers and preparation for higher education. It will also serve the critical national function of capacity building and human resource development for educational assessment and tests.

The AKU-EB, in association with the University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) will coordinate training for the teachers of affiliated schools so that they can guide their students' learning appropriately. AKU-IED will also advise on the use of support materials for learning.

The AKU-EB commenced work in July 2003, with the appointment of Dr. Thomas Christie, former Dean of Education, University of Manchester, as its first Director, and expects to offer the first SSC examination by the summer of 2006 and the HSC examination in 2008. ■

Obstetrics and Gynaecology: Impacting Reproductive Health

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AKU has 13 full-time faculty, two instructors and four part-time faculty. It aims to address the need for human resource capacity building by producing graduates who will be life-long learners. The department seeks to achieve excellence in clinical skills, academics and relevant research for providing compassionate and ethical care to patients based on the best available evidence. From its humble beginnings in 1986, it has gone from strength to strength in provision of quality services and care.



Minimal Access Surgery is one of the many services offered by the department. Dr. Javed Rizvi (right), Chair of the department, and Dr. Nadeem Zuberi, Assistant Professor.

In the last few years, the department initiated the development of five sub-specialties, offering state-of-the-art inpatient and outpatient services. The Feto-maternal unit was the first sub-specialty to become operational. Headed by Dr. Shama Munim, Assistant Professor, it has three faculty members who have a special interest in this area. They are Professor Jehan Ara Pal, Honorary Consultant, Dr. Lumaan Sheikh, Senior Instructor, and Dr. Romana Hamid, Assistant Professor.

There are four other sub-specialties in the process of development. Gynaecologic Oncology, providing comprehensive service for screening and management of gynaecological cancers, has Dr. Aliya Aziz Begum, Assistant Professor, working in close collaboration with Dr. Javed Rizvi, Professor and Chair of the department, and Dr. Nasreen Chaudhry, Associate Professor. The Urogynaecology team, comprising Dr. Javed Rizvi and Dr. Tahira Yasmin Naru, Associate Professor, will soon be strengthened with the arrival of Dr. Raheela Mohsin Rizvi, Senior Instructor, currently training in this sub-specialty in Australia. The department offers Infertility services at primary and secondary levels, and is developing advanced tertiary care management in this discipline. Dr. Javed Rizvi and Dr. Rahat Najam Qureshi, Associate Professor, have a special interest in this area. Finally, the department offers Minimal Access Gynaecologic Surgery, for which Dr. Nadeem Zuberi, Assistant Professor, will soon be leaving for training overseas. Apart from the above sub-specialties, and comprehensive diagnosis and treatment of routine gynaecological disorders, the department also has strong Obstetric services, headed by Dr. Zeenat Eva Khan, Assistant Professor. Dr. Khan is collaborating with the Nursing Services and the Hospital's Management Review Committee, chaired by Dr. Shama Munim, to ensure provision of care based on best available evidence.

Along with the provision of clinical services, the department also seeks to provide high quality education and training at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. At the undergraduate level, it is actively developing innovative strategies to facilitate learning. These include evidence-based and problem-based learning, a student mentorship programme and the use of core logbooks, enabling students to keep a record of clinical work undertaken. The department is currently developing a study guide for undergraduate students, to facilitate self-learning. At the postgraduate level, directed by Dr. Rozina



Dr. Javed Rizvi, Professor and Chair of the department, with his team of Obstetrics and Gynaecology consultants.



Provision of care is based on best available evidence.

Sikander, Senior Instructor, the department has an effective and efficient postgraduate training programme and a postgraduate committee. The four-year programme inculcates postgraduates with sound knowledge, appropriate skills and attitudes towards practice. Sixty percent of the department's faculty are AKU graduates, while others trained at the University are working throughout Pakistan and overseas. In the area of research, the department has been collaborating with partners both inside and outside the country. Faculty members are working on thematic research topics in collaboration with other departments within the university.

"In its future endeavours, the department seeks to be a pioneer in establishing sub-specialities along with professional development of specialists and faculty by inculcating research potentials. The department is also focusing on developing innovative teaching and learning strategies in undergraduate and postgraduate education," said Dr. Javed Rizvi. ■

For more information, please visit: <http://www.aku.edu/akuh/hs/cs/obstgyna.shtml>

Patient Welfare Programme Jehangir Gets Hip Replacement Surgery

The first time 38-year-old Jehangir felt pain in his legs was when he was loading a crate of office equipment on his truck in Kuwait City. He did not take the matter seriously. A brief rest provided him relief and he resumed his duties as usual.

The discomfort, however, was perennial. Most of the times it was bearable, some times it was not. He used household remedies prescribed by his concerned mother and wife in their letters from Pakistan, such as oil massages before going to bed. One night, after a laborious day at work, the pain returned with a vengeance and progressed to a point where he begged his roommate, a Karachiite named Shakil, to take him to a nearby hospital. He was diagnosed with severe arthritis. In the coming weeks his condition worsened to the extent that he was unable to walk. Bedridden and alone, he had no option but to resign from his job and return to Pakistan for his treatment.

Since the Welfare Programme's inception, Rs. 0.9 billion (US\$ 15.5 million) has been disbursed to over 175,000 patients.

Hailing from Swat, in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, Jehangir is the only breadwinner in a family consisting of his wife, three small children, an aged mother, a widowed sister and her four children. On Shakil's insistence Jehangir arrived at Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) in great pain where he was told that the disease had affected his hip joint, and the only solution was to undergo hip replacement surgery.

He could only contribute Rs. 25,500 (US\$ 440) towards the cost of the treatment, estimated to cost Rs. 206,782 (US\$ 3,565).



Learning of his financial constraints, his physician recommended that he consult the Hospital's welfare officer. After reviewing his case, the officer assured him of his eligibility for financial assistance. The Patient Welfare Programme provided Rs. 81,282 (US\$ 1,400) towards the cost of his surgery. The remaining Rs.100,000 (US\$ 1,724) was donated by 'The Patients Behbud Society for AKUH', started by a group of the University's well wishers and friends, through which 'zakat' contributions are received and disbursed to the 'mustahqeen' (deserving). Since the Hospital's Welfare Programme's inception, Rs. 0.9 billion (US\$ 15.5 million) has been disbursed to over 175,000 patients with financial difficulties.

After a successful surgery, Jehangir was soon back on his feet, and is now in Kuwait where he continues to support his family. ■

AKU Convocation 2003

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Pakistan. A graduate received a Master's degree in Epidemiology and seven others their Master's degree in the joint disciplines of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Five graduates of Master's in Health Policy and Management also received their degrees. Thirty-four graduates from AKU Institute for Educational Development were awarded Master's degree in Education. Abdul Hakeem of the MBBS Class of 2003, received the Best Graduate of the Year award. The University, whose graduates are drawn from all over Pakistan including the rural areas, has so far graduated 3,168 doctors, school teachers, and nurses.

At the Convocation, the University also honoured two academic luminaries by conferring Honorary Doctor of Letters on Dr. Mohammad Afzal, former Chairman, University Grants Commission and former Federal Minister for Education, for his services in several areas of higher education in Pakistan over the past 40 years, including the establishment of the Department of Administrative Sciences at the University of Punjab, and his role in establishing the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, the National Institute of Public Administration and the Administrative Staff College, Lahore; and Dr. Francis Sutton for his role as chief consultant and principal draftsman for the Harvard Committee Report on AKU (1983) and as secretary-member of the Chancellor's Commission on the Future Evolution of the AKU (1993-95) as well as his dedicated service to the cause of social sector development in the world, especially in Asia and Africa.

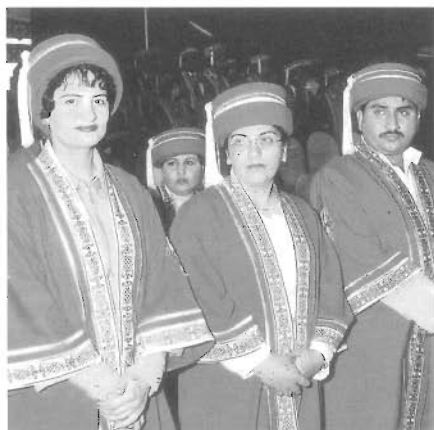
In his address, His Highness the Aga Khan said, "It is only in the last few years that new voices, such as the World Bank's, have noted the world's 'knowledge revolution' in which it is not so much factories, land and machinery that now drive the world economy but the knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people. All societies, it has become clear, must invest in higher education for their talented men and women or risk being relegated to subordinate, vulnerable positions in the world." The Aga Khan sketched plans for the University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences that is establishing a residential campus on 600 acres in Karachi. The campus will cater to some 1,400 undergraduates and provide a broad curriculum covering the sciences, economics and information technology, as well as world history, Asian languages, elements of Muslim civilisations, history of South Asian and Persian-speaking cultures. "Muslim universities," said the Aga Khan, "have a

unique responsibility: to engender in their societies a new confidence ... based on intellectual excellence, but also on a refreshed and enlightened appreciation of the scientific, linguistic, artistic and religious traditions that underpin and give such global value to our own Muslim civilisations – even though it may be ignored or not understood by parts of the Ummah itself." He recalled that even as heir to one of the greatest civilisations the world has known, the Muslim world "has inherited from history not of its own making, some of the worst and longest conflicts of the last hundred years, those of the Middle East and Kashmir." In the face of "perils, and voids of understanding," the Aga Khan spoke of a duty to tackle new challenges with particular urgency. Insisting that



His Highness the Aga Khan conferring the honorary degrees on (L to R) Dr. Mohammad Afzal and Dr. Francis Sutton.

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Graduating students of AKU-IED



Syrian Minister for Education, His Excellency Dr. Ali Saad (right), with His Highness the Aga Khan, during the Convocation ceremony.

"faculty be challenged as a matter of university policy to expand the boundaries of human knowledge." He said that AKU would "pledge its energies and imagination to advancing effective public policy." "This naturally follows the precepts of Islam that the scientific application of reason, the building of society and the refining of human aspirations and ethics should always reinforce one another." He cited, in particular, AKU's applied research strengths in community health sciences and its productive relations with scientists and



Graduates of AKU-SON.



Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali conferring the degree on Shahnaz Ghulam Hussain Warwani, a graduate of Diploma in Nursing and recipient of the highest number of awards at AKU-SON.



Muhammad Afzal and Dr. Francis Sutton.



Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali conferring the degree on Abdul Hakim of the MBBS programme, who was declared Best Graduate of the Year.

federal and provincial policy-makers in fields such as nutrition, educational testing, maternal and child health, immunization strategies and vaccine development and epidemiology.

"Yet another example of our growing emphasis on relevant research is the recent discovery by a group of our genetic researchers of a gene involved in the modulation of high blood pressure," said Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU, in his Convocation address. He hoped that the groundbreaking discovery would eventually contribute to designing better treatment for patients suffering from this particular form of hypertension. The discovery may also contribute to forming the basis for the development of genetic tests aimed at assessing an individual's genetic susceptibility to essential hypertension.

Reflecting on the progress made by the University, President Kassim-Lakha said, "Thus, twenty years after its founding, the academic quality, and the human resource capacity developed by AKU in Pakistan have enabled it to move beyond Pakistan to establish programmes on three continents, with 10

teaching sites spread over Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan, Syria and the United Kingdom." The spirit of the Convocation was aptly summed up in the words of valedictorian, Sara Hanif of the MBBS programme, that "the magic of AKU can not be expressed in words, for it is something that touches each student who enters this wonderful world – be it an aspiring nurse, a teacher, a doctor, an epidemiologist or a health policy manager. Today, it binds 20 years of graduates together, all as part of the AKU family. A world where you are not merely a roll number and what you learn isn't merely 'work' for the future... it is your life."

Chancellor Inaugurates New Facilities

Later in the day, the Aga Khan inaugurated new facilities for cardiac care and residences for women, and laid the foundation for a cancer care building.

The Aga Khan described the date of the foundation as one "on which this University can say we are a national university in Pakistan because the full spectrum or nearly the full spectrum of this wonderful country have come forward and have said 'we wish to support this institution'". The Chancellor added, "As time will move us forward it will be important that the Trustees



His Highness the Aga Khan, accompanied by the Khimji family, inaugurating the Khimji Building for Cardiac Services.

and I should look back on this date with gratitude, humility but also pride – pride in an Institution which has earned itself through the people who have worked with it, the credibility that needed to have become a recognised national institution in Pakistan." The Oncology Services Building, which is scheduled to open in November 2005, will cost US\$ 7.6 million. The Building will be a comprehensive cancer centre offering state-of-

the-art screening, diagnostic and treatment services. In his address, Dr. Aryn Alidina, Associate Professor and Oncology Consultant, Department of Medicine, described the facility as one that would fill a significant void in cancer care services in Karachi, and will raise the standards of cancer care to new heights. "We are indebted to the many donors who made this project possible. Their generosity will save lives, and improve the quality of lives, of patients for many years to come," added Dr. Alidina. A total of 48 units of US\$ 83 million were contributed by national and multinational companies and various communities. While most of the donations came from Pakistan, the largest one of US\$ 500,000 came from San Francisco-based Dr. Isha Abdullah, a 1992 graduate of AKU Medical College, and her husband Asim. The 29,600 sq. ft. Oncology Services Building will be part of a growing Ambulatory Care Complex at AKUH. Patient care will also focus on prevention, with screening and radiation therapy for common cancers and AKUH sponsored health awareness programmes.

As is the Hospital policy, cancer patients in need will also be provided financial assistance through the Patient Welfare Programme and zakat funds contributed to the Patients' Behbud Society for AKUH. Since the beginning of the Programme, over 190,000 patients have benefited from AKUH's Patient Welfare Programme, and Rs. 960 million (US\$ 16.5 million) has been disbursed through this programme.

The new facilities, the Khimji Building for Cardiac Services and the Karimi, Noor and Arman Rupani Residences for women, are a testament to the University's mission of setting the highest standards possible in teaching, research and service, as well as a reflection of the generous support of donors towards the benefit of patients. As Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) continues to broaden its range of services to meet growing demands for high quality care services in Pakistan, it ensures that patient convenience is not compromised at any stage. The Khimji Building for Cardiac Services reflects this priority. Speaking on the occasion, His Highness the Aga Khan said, "Cardiology was identified very early on as a key medical need in Pakistan and the question was not whether cardiology was a need, the question was when could this University equip itself in an appropriate way to offer a quality level of cardiological care where the people of

Pakistan would be confident, that the care they were receiving here would be close to or as good as what they would receive in the best centres anywhere else in the world."

"Cardiac ailments remain an important killer of mankind, and coronary artery disease in particular claims more lives than any other disease. In a developing country like ours, a dramatic increase in the incidence of this disease has been seen," said Dr. Shahid Sami, Chief of Cardiothoracic Section at AKUH, at the inauguration. Costing US\$ 6.6 million and spread over 20,000 sq. ft, the Khimji Building has a 16-bed Coronary Care Unit (CCU) and a teaching room on the ground floor, and the first floor houses three operating theatres. Two are dedicated to cardiac surgery, and a third to general surgery. Recovery facilities are also provided on the first floor. Lounges, lockers and a teaching room are located on the second floor and on-call rooms on the third floor.

"Cardiology was identified very early on as a key medical need in Pakistan and the question was not whether cardiology was a need, the question was when could this University equip itself in an appropriate way to offer a quality level of cardiological care where the people of Pakistan would be confident, that the care they were receiving here would be close to or as good as what they would receive in the best centres anywhere else in the world."

— His Highness the Aga Khan

AKU places great emphasis on the advancement of women in its programmes and recruitment. It attracts women from all over Pakistan who seek career development in a safe and attractive environment. The quarters for professional women consisting of the Karimi Residences, the Noor Residences and the Arman Rupani Residences will meet the housing needs of professional women, including other professional out-of-station women by offering safe, secure and convenient on-campus facilities. The built-up area of the Residences is 64,500 sq. ft, on 8.6 acres. The design is in harmony with the University's architectural idiom, offering a pleasant environment with good living conditions. The total cost of the project is US\$ 6.3 million. ■

For more information, photos and speeches, please visit: <http://www.aku.edu/news/con2003/>



His Highness the Aga Khan, cutting ribbons at the Karimi, Noor, and Arman Rupani Residences for women, and laying the foundation stone for the Oncology Services Building.

Appointment of New Trustee

Princess Zahra Aga Khan, the eldest of His Highness the Aga Khan's four children, was appointed to the Board of Trustees in July 2003. After her graduation from Harvard University with a BA (Honours) degree in Development Studies in 1994, Princess Zahra joined the Secretariat of His Highness the Aga Khan at Aiglemont in France.

She is Director of the Social Welfare Department at the Secretariat, and is also responsible for specific social development institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). These include Aga Khan Education Services, Aga Khan Health Services and Aga Khan Planning and Building Services. Princess Zahra also works with institutions supported by the Ismaili community in the areas

of social welfare, women's activities and youth programmes.

She chairs the International Social Development and Sports Foundation (ISDSF) which seeks to act as a catalyst for replicable, short-term programmes addressing issues facing youth, women and the elderly in developed and developing countries alike. Princess Zahra is also a member of the Aga Khan Development Network Committee. ■



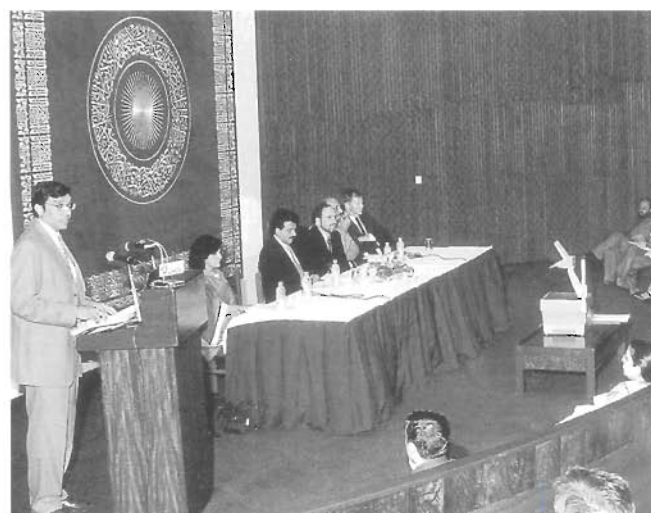
International Vaccine Conference – First of its Kind in Pakistan

Eminent national and international speakers participated in a three-day conference on 'Vaccine Production and Utilisation in Developing Countries: Issues, Prospects and Implications for Pakistan', hosted by AKU in August 2003. The conference was held in collaboration with COMSTECH (Scientific Committee of the Organization of Islamic Countries); Pakistan Paediatric Association; the Vaccine Development Task Force, Pakistan; and AKU.

The first of its kind in the country, the conference provided a forum for discussion on virtually every aspect of vaccinology. Participating speakers reflected a diversity of professionals, and included representatives from academia, the private sector, government officials and international organisations. Federal Minister for Health, Mohammad Nasir Khan, was the chief guest at the inaugural session. He called on the private sector to join hands with the government in the fight against vaccine-preventable diseases. In his keynote address, Dr. John Clemens, Director, International Vaccine Institute, Seoul, Korea, stressed the importance of translational research in implementing new vaccine initiatives and technology in developing countries, and shared his organisation's experiences in China, Indonesia, Vietnam and India.

The event focused on various aspects of vaccine research and development and their potential significance for Pakistan. It sought to provide an opportunity for dialogue on the global epidemiology, highlighting public health significance of vaccines for child health, while allowing participants to exchange views as well as discuss a blueprint for vaccine development and research in Pakistan. Insights into the newly emerging field of biotechnology, with special relevance to vaccine development, were gained, and knowledge and skills in vaccine-related microbiological research were refined and upgraded. Distinguished speakers from other developing countries, such as Cuba, Indonesia

and Iran, provided useful insights into their efforts for gaining self-sufficiency in vaccine production. Meanwhile, representatives from international pharmaceutical firms shed light on the role of the private sector in promoting vaccine research and utilisation in developing countries. A clear consensus emerged on the need to invest more in vaccine research through increased training and development in basic sciences, and formation of viable public-private partnerships to implement self-sufficiency in vaccine production, especially in Pakistan.



Dr. Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta, the Husein Laljee Dewraj Professor of Paediatrics, AKU, speaking at the three-day conference on vaccine production.

Addressing the concluding session, Federal Health Secretary, Ejaz Rahim, underscored the need to institutionalise vaccine development with a strong emphasis on capacity building. He assured the participants that the government was committed to seriously considering and adopting the recommendations of the National Vaccine Development Task Force, which are currently under review. ■

Zeenatkhanu Kanji: A Role Model for Nursing Profession

Zeenatkhanu Kanji has had over 30 years experience in nursing, studying and working in East Africa, the UK, Canada, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Over 10 of these years were spent at Aga Khan University School of Nursing (AKU-SON), where she held senior administrative and teaching positions, contributing significantly to faculty and curriculum development and research.

Kanji obtained her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Illinois, Chicago, USA, and is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. She interrupted these studies for a year in 2003, to initiate AKU-SON's programme for capacity building and infrastructure development in Afghanistan.



What inspired you to pursue a career in nursing?

I was born in a developing country in Mombasa, East Africa, and my father earned only 400 Kenyan Shillings (US\$ 5), which had to feed six of us in the family. My mother was a housewife and also looked after four developmentally challenged children who lived with us, earning 400 Kenyan Shillings (US\$ 5) a month. After finishing school, I worked as an auxiliary nurse to contribute to our family income. Whenever I reflect on how I joined nursing, I thank 'Allah' for being born into a family with limited resources, and being forced to work as an auxiliary nurse, which gave me the opportunity to observe the nursing profession and realise that I was a people's person.

What milestones have you passed during your 30 years in the nursing profession?

After working as an auxiliary nurse for one and half years, I felt I could take on nursing as a career. So, I was very excited, when I got accepted into the nursing diploma programme at Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1968. But my parents were reluctant to let me go, as they had by then also found me a possible husband. However, I did not want to get married at that point, as it would not allow me to pursue my career in nursing. Therefore, I moved away from home to join

the diploma nursing programme. I consider this action to be a turning point in both my personal and professional life.

Another significant event was the commissioning of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Aga Khan University Hospital in 1987. I was by then a full-time BScN student in Canada, and had come over to Karachi for my summer holidays. It was a great challenge to convince the medical professionals to work collaboratively with nurses, and to demonstrate that nurses were equally knowledgeable in caring for newborn babies.

Acceptance into the PhD programme in 2001 at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, was the third important moment in my life, as it allowed me to pursue my philosophy of lifelong learning. I hope to complete the programme, even if it means going at a snail's pace!

What were some of the challenges you faced in your work, especially in Afghanistan?

Working in Afghanistan felt like living in the past, and we faced difficulties with basic amenities such as water, electricity, transportation, and the non-availability of appropriate equipment. But getting the opportunity to work for a year in Kabul, assisting the Intermediate Medical Education Institute (IMEI) to set up skills, computer and science laboratories was truly the experience of a lifetime. The IMEI is a governmental institution and has the primary responsibility of training nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the country. It involved collaborating with numerous stakeholders and trying to come up with the best options, taking into consideration the lack of financial, material and qualified human resources.

When systems are in place, we take a lot of things for granted. I found that working in Afghanistan, I had to be astute and think of innovative ways of teaching even the basic skills. To give you an example, teaching first year nursing skills, such as bathing a patient, taking vital signs and hand washing, is usually a fairly straightforward task. However, due to decades of war, there was no equipment available. Therefore, a list of equipment had to be identified, priced, purchased, and then delivered to the IMEI. For safe keeping of this equipment, cupboards and locks had to be bought. This is how we had to start putting systems into place.

Building the infrastructure was yet another challenge. The well supplying water had gone dry because of a severe drought, so it had to be dug deeper, and a water pump needed to be installed. This did not resolve the issue because we soon discovered other problems such as leaking pipes and a non-functional drainage system. This experience has strengthened my faith more than ever before. I now strongly believe that if there is a will, commitment and appropriate support available, positive outcomes are achievable, even in the most difficult of circumstances and environments.

What are your future plans and how will your doctoral studies assist you in planning and managing nursing education?

Working internationally gives me immense satisfaction, so I have dedicated myself to working in developing countries in the future. One has to be better equipped when working overseas. Although I had a Master's degree in nursing, I found this was not enough. Doctoral studies are giving me the opportunity to observe and work with various faculty members and learn innovative ways of teaching and conducting research. I intend to become an informed researcher, a facilitator for other faculty members, and a role model for students.

How do you balance a demanding career with your personal life?

It is a challenging experience, to say the least! But during my travels, I have met the most wonderful people who have become my family and have supported me in sharing the responsibility of looking after my son. I also find that my positive, optimistic attitude enables me to find the right balance in my life, knowing that there is always a ray of hope at the end of each difficult journey. ■

Dr. Rozina Karmaliani Obtains Distinguished Leadership Award from University of Minnesota

Dr. Rozina Karmaliani (BScN, '91), Assistant Professor, Joint Faculty of Health Sciences (School of Nursing and Community Health Sciences), AKU, and Director, BScN programme, Aga Khan University School of Nursing (AKU-SON), was recently awarded the Distinguished Leadership Award for Internationals by the University of Minnesota. This accolade recognises those of the University's alumni, former students and friends who have distinguished themselves as leaders in their professional careers.



Dr. Karmaliani completed her Master's in Public Health, Master of Science in Nursing, and a PhD from the University of Minnesota, where she also received the Juran Fellowship Award for Leadership in Quality for her PhD thesis.

Speaking of her rewarding educational experience in the U.S.A, she said that she greatly enjoyed being a global citizen as part of a diverse cross-cultural group of students and faculty. The first PhD alumna of AKU-SON to return to her alma mater, Dr. Karmaliani continues to provide leadership to numerous national and University level committees. ■

Study of Muslim Civilisations and AKU-ISMC's Bibliographical Project

Over the last fourteen hundred years, histories, cultures and the religion of Muslim people have been an object of study both by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This has led to the creation of an enormous corpus of literature encompassing a wide range of attitudes, approaches, languages, regions and disciplines. Along the way, there have been moments of soul searching within the scholarship with regard to its trends and directions. One resulting observation of this process has been that there is a linguistic divide in terms of access to scholarly resources on Islam. The works on Islam in European languages are hardly available in Muslim societies, and the works produced in Muslim societies remain largely unknown in Europe and America. Similarly, there is little communication between scholars within the Muslim world. Thus, scholarship on Muslim societies in various regions proceeds without taking much account of developments elsewhere. The Annotated Bibliographical Project (ABP) of AKU-ISMC was envisioned as a response to this situation, aiming to reduce this chasm through indexing and providing abstracts of works concerning Muslim civilisations, published in various languages.

The study of Islam and Muslim societies in modern times started in the nineteenth century in Europe. Methodologically, it was rooted in the disciplines of Biblical and Classical Studies. This twin influence contributed to making the study of Islam essentially a philological exercise. It consisted mainly of translations of manuscripts from Muslim societies, the study of doctrinal and theological developments, and the growth of institutions such as the Caliphate. During this time, scholarship on Islam by Muslims was largely informed by a tendency to highlight the relevance of Islamic tradition in modern times. These perspectives continued to guide the scholarship well into the twentieth century, and despite the criticism they later received, many works produced in this period continue to have influence.

In the twentieth century, scholarship on Muslim societies was shaped by several political as well as intellectual trends. For example, there was a more assertive tone of scholarship from scholars of the 'third world'. Among other things, this way of scholarship argued for the dismantling of established canons of scholarship which it saw as euro-centric. The growth of movements such as post-structuralism, post-modernism and feminism also influenced scholarship on Islam.

Since the 1970s, there has been a tremendous increase of scholarly interest in Muslim societies. Though partly a result of the prevailing political climate, it has also been an outcome of increasing interconnectivity between methodologies applied in Islamic Studies and those in the social sciences and the humanities. In addition to contributing to new and insightful approaches to the study of Muslims, this intensification has led to a revival of self-reflection in the field, making scholarship

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Scholars Discuss Approaches to Pluralism in Muslim Contexts

Recognising pluralism within Muslim societies and respecting differences should form the bedrock of intellectual and social outlook among Muslims. This was one of the central conclusions of a seminar on 'Pluralism in Muslim Contexts', organised by Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC) in Karachi in October, 2003. This was the third in a series of seminars on Pluralism in Muslim Contexts, the first two of which had previously been held in London.

Three eminent national and international scholars from the United Kingdom, Hungary and Pakistan, addressed the seminar's theme from philosophical, historical and comparative perspectives. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU, welcomed the audience consisting of academicians, professionals and students from diverse backgrounds. Outlining the objectives of the Institute and its current activities, he quoted from the 1994 AKU Chancellor's Commission Report, that "the University must seek ways to combine disciplined, objective inquiry with imaginative efforts to use its heritage to provide visions of the meaning of life in the modern world." He said the study of Islam as a set of civilisations is a new field, not only within the Muslim Ummah, but across the world.

Dr. Abdou Filali-Ansary, Director of AKU-ISMC, in his introductory comments, highlighted the importance of the seminar in building bridges among scholars, professionals, opinion-makers, and community leaders. He stressed that this first public event of AKU-ISMC in Karachi was part of the Institute's objective to provide an academic space that would bring together scholars of various persuasions to jointly address the challenges faced by Muslims today.

Dr. Elizabeth Frazer of Oxford University, reflected on the concept of pluralism and its place in contemporary intellectual discourses, tracing its roots to counter enlightenment, philosophical scepticism and politics. Dr. Frazer explored the multiple definitions of pluralism and highlighted its consequences for relationships between the 'self' and the 'other'. "By pluralism we mean any normative theory of values, or any moral way of life, or any system of authority and government, in which there are many values which compete or are in tension

with one another," she said. Syrian-born Professor Aziz Al-Azmeh of the Central European University in Hungary, argued that although Muslim civilisations in the past had often been tolerant societies, pluralism in the contemporary world needed to draw on new intellectual resources. Concepts of democracy, pluralism and civil society, although originally western, are now universal.

Approaching the topic from an empirical perspective, Professor Tariq Rahman of Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, discussed the forces fostering or hindering pluralism in the Pakistani context. He drew upon his research on various educational systems in Pakistan, including Urdu and English language schools as well as 'madrassas' (religious schools), noting the intricate link between social conditions, such as poverty and attitudes towards pluralism. In the question-and-



L to R: Dr. David Taylor, Acting Provost, AKU; Dr. Abdou Filali-Ansary, Director, AKU-ISMC; Dr. Elizabeth Frazer, Oxford University; Professor Tariq Rahman, Quaid-e-Azam University; and Professor Aziz Al-Azmeh of the Central European University.

answer session, participants appreciated the relevance and timeliness of the Institute's initiatives, saying they looked forward to participating in such future seminars. The series continues with a fourth seminar planned in London in November 2003. ■

*For more information and speeches, please visit:
<http://www.aku.edu/news/majorevents/ismcconf.shtml>*

AKU-ISMC's Bibliographical Project

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on Islam itself an object of study. Publication of Edward Said's book *Orientalism* in 1979 is seen by many as a crucial juncture in this revival.

AKU-ISMC's Bibliography Project can be seen as a product of this on-going self-assessment. As a response to the issue of access to scholarship on Muslim societies, the Project is seeking to mobilise communication avenues (the Internet, in particular) in order to achieve dissemination of knowledge about

scholarship on Muslim civilisations. In this regard, a meeting was organised in London in June 2003, which brought together highly qualified individuals familiar with the intellectual resources on Muslim Civilisations in various languages/ regions of the world. Their key recommendations were two fold. First, to approach the Project incrementally, possibly starting with well-conceived pilot projects and, secondly, linking the initial phase of the Project to AKU-ISMC's educational programmes. AKU-ISMC is currently working on these proposals through its key works initiative that aims to create annotated bibliographies for its Master's programme. This initiative will ensure that AKU-ISMC's own graduates have access to key scholarly works from several languages. ■

Education Conference Marks AKU-IED's 10th Anniversary

Governments and Organizations Seek AKU-IED's help in Developing Education Systems

"We at AKU must aspire to attain greatness through the creation of knowledge and that is one of the most important messages that I would like to leave with you." This was stated by Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of AKU and the Chief Guest at an international conference on education that marked the 10th anniversary of Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) in August 2003. The three-day conference titled 'Impact: Making a Difference' provided a forum for the Institute, its partners and Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) to share their reflections and findings of impact studies on school improvement initiatives, and to deliberate on possible future strategic directions for AKU-IED's partnership with school systems.

Kassim-Lakha, recounting the early days of the University, highlighted its commitment to research-based quality education. Emphasizing the role of Professional Development Teachers, he said, "Your impact is going to be much bigger, do not think that you are just a teacher, do not think that you are just an educator, you are an educator of society, not just of school children or college students."

A noteworthy point emanating from the three days of deliberations was that PDTs felt that their newly acquired methods of teaching has left a considerable impact on the education systems of their respective countries. "This is because PDTs are planning better lessons, giving more open-ended and challenging tasks to students, and using different and more appropriate teaching strategies," added the AKU President. He said this had, in turn, led many governments and organizations to seek AKU-IED's help in developing their education systems. Even in Pakistan, President Kassim-Lakha noted, the University's impact on government policies regarding education had been significant. He stressed the need for multiple IED's, and said discussions were under way for the establishment of another IED in East Africa.



AKU-IED students and senior leadership of the University at the 10th anniversary of the Institute in August 2003.

The conference invited prominent educationists and academicians, including Dr Stephen Anderson from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, who gave his keynote address on 'In Search of Impact: Teacher Development for School Improvement'. Prof Mark Bray, Dean and Chair, Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, discoursed on 'Making a Difference in Education through Community Participation'. The participants included Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman of AKU Board of Trustees; Dr David Taylor, Acting Provost of AKU; prominent educationists and academicians from Pakistan, as well as 109 Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Central Asia and East Africa.



Classroom discussions and question-and-answer sessions during the education conference at AKU-IED.

In his welcome address, Dr Gordon MacLeod, Director of AKU-IED, praised the role of the former directors, faculty, staff and graduates of AKU-IED for the development of the Institute in a short span of 10 years. He said the Institute had produced more than 200 graduates from the Advanced Diploma programmes; almost 400 graduates from the Certificate Programme in Educational Leadership and Management; and almost 2,500 people, the bulk of them in Pakistan, have completed Certificate programmes in classroom teaching of curriculum areas. Elaborating on the successful research activities of AKU-IED, he said the extensive research activities had been institutionalised in a major research and policy studies initiative. "We have recently completed a highly successful series of policy dialogue workshops and we hope that these have laid the foundation for the future possible development of a Centre of Excellence in Policy Studies in Education. Other Centres of Excellence might emerge in Educational Leadership and Management and in some aspect of Teacher Education." AKU-IED aspires to achieve the highest level of quality in research activities. "This means not only the academic excellence guaranteed by international publication in the most prestigious of research journals, but it also means guaranteeing and assuring quality in the classroom and practicality for teachers, in that kind of research and scholarly activity," concluded Dr. MacLeod. ■

Canadian Minister Praises AKU's Achievements

The Honourable Allan Rock, Minister of Industry, Government of Canada, led an 11-member delegation to AKU in October 2003. He was accompanied by Her Excellency Margaret Huber, High Commissioner for Canada to Pakistan; Mr. Raymond Simard, Member of Parliament for St. Boniface and other senior Canadian government delegates.



The Honourable Allan Rock (extreme left), Minister of Industry, Government of Canada, with Dr. Yasmin Amarsi, Dean, AKU School of Nursing, on a tour of the University.

Welcoming the guests, Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman, AKU Board of Trustees, highlighted the strong ties that exist between Canada and Pakistan, forged through development cooperation projects in the energy sector, transport, agriculture and environmental conservation for over fifty years. He also thanked the Minister for his country's invaluable support in AKU's development and progress, including the human resource contributions from Canadian professional volunteers, faculty and staff.

Thanking senior AKU leadership who were present on the occasion, Minister Allan Rock acknowledged the University as a centre of excellence, saying "We are proud to partner with you towards the achievement of His Highness the Aga Khan's vision - social justice and equality of access to education, health care and advancement." The Minister also expressed his confidence that the relationship between AKU and Canada would continue to grow deeper and stronger over the years.

AKU has received ongoing financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency, for its School of Nursing, Medical College and the Institute for Educational Development. Academic support in curriculum development and faculty training has been provided by numerous Canadian universities, such as McMaster, McGill and the University of Toronto.

There have also been research and other collaborative endeavours with the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto; University of Alberta and University of British Columbia. ■

Wellcome Trust Funds Major AKU Research on High Blood Pressure

The UK-based Wellcome Trust recently awarded a US\$ 500,000 research grant to AKU for a study on high blood pressure. The project, entitled 'Population-based strategies for effective control of high blood pressure in Pakistan', is an investigator-initiated intervention study designed by Dr. Tazeen Jafar (MBBS, '90), Assistant Professor, and her colleagues from the departments of Medicine and Community Health Sciences at AKU. To date, this is the largest intervention study in the country on controlling hypertension.

Hypertension is a major public health problem in Pakistan, affecting about 20 percent of the population aged 15 and over. "In Pakistan, one in three middle-aged individuals suffer from hypertension, which is the most common risk factor for cardiovascular and kidney diseases. However, the majority of hypertensive patients are either under-diagnosed or under-treated. This study will evaluate affordable strategies for lowering blood pressure in our population", said Dr. Tazeen Jafar, who is also Director, Clinical Epidemiology Unit, and Head, Section of Nephrology, AKU.

The three-year community-based study will be undertaken by a team of 40 health professionals, who will first receive three months of intensive training in providing health education and research methodologies. This will be followed by population-based home health education, and training of general practitioners in cost effective treatments of hypertension. The long-term objective is to spearhead the development of a sustainable and applicable nationwide blood pressure control programme.

Dr. Mohammad Khurshid, Dean Medical College, AKU, hoped that "other institutions in Pakistan will also take measures to promote a much needed research culture for combating diseases that pose a heavy burden on our population." These sentiments were also echoed by his colleagues, Dr. Wasim Jafri, Chairman, Department of Medicine as well as Dr. Masood Kadir, Acting Chairman, Department of Community Health Sciences. ■