



PREPARING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Instead of a cup of coffee, Winnie Sophia Bandasile, begins most weekday mornings sharing a cup of porridge with her students.

As a pre-school teacher at the Ali Hassan Mwinyi School, a state-run institution in Dar es Salaam, Sophia believes that this ritual is part of her students' education and her responsibility as their teacher. "They are still growing, and [the porridge] gives them energy." Sophia's approach to pre-school education is unique in the government school system in Tanzania.

In her Early Childhood Education and Development certificate course at Aga Khan University Institute for Education Development, East Africa (AKU-IED, EA), Sophia learnt about the brain development of chil-

dren from 0-8 years. She saw that young children learn better when they are grouped with children of the same ability. "I divide children into groups according to their interests. I want to help these children reach their full potential."

In her class of 30 students, Sophia creates two groups of 15 students each. One group works on their own requiring minimal supervision, while the others work in play areas to develop interest in drawing, make-belief activities, and science projects. She observes these students to gauge their interests and develop teaching and provide support where needed. "The course [at AKU-IED, EA] helped us understand how children think and learn in relation to their developmental characteristics. We want them to make competent choices."

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Sophia, her students and the other teachers in the school have benefited from the knowledge she gained from her programme. Her class has become a model for early childhood education in the state system. “Even ministers come to see our class and want [to know]

what is our secret. We told them that [the] secret is Aga Khan [University].”

Since its inception in 2006, AKU-IED, EA has graduated 1,289 teachers. Operations for a certificate level course at the Institute in Tanzania cost \$18,000 per year. Through generous donations, each course is subsidised to approximately \$76 per teacher for each course.

Without this subsidy, teachers like Sophia could not afford the programme. Your continuous support can help teachers improve their skills and make learning fun for a generation of preschoolers, starting a cycle of life-long learning and leadership.

Aga Khan University

Chartered in 1983, Aga Khan University is a private, autonomous university that promotes human welfare through research, teaching and community service. Based on the principles of *quality, access, impact and relevance*, the University has campuses and programmes in Afghanistan, East Africa, Egypt, Pakistan, Syria and the United Kingdom.

Through its needs-blind admissions policy based on merit, the University imbues the most promising leaders and thinkers of tomorrow with an ethic of service and the skills to help communities solve their most pressing challenges while instilling the highest professional competence.



The Aga Khan University

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