



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY



Critical Creative
Innovative Thinking

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Our mission is to promote a multi-disciplinary ecosystem of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship within and outside of AKU

The Critical Creative innovative Thinking (CCIT) forum at AKU has been dedicatedly working within the biomedical/healthcare innovation space in Pakistan for a few years now. It is a quasi-virtual co-innovation and incubation hub with the goal to promote a better future using 21st century skills, ranging from critical, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial thinking to design principles steeped in empathy.

It has adopted student-centric frameworks for channeling innovation through creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Some of these frameworks include Ignite Talks, Narrative Medicine, Hackathons, Incubation and Design Thinking Strategies (see the continuum below). In January 2020, CCIT launched a unique Innovation Fellowship, for training young professionals in the specs of creative innovation for healthcare and biomedicine in low resource settings.

To say this year was unusual would be an understatement. Given the unprecedented unpredictability brought on by the pandemic, we had to make several pivots. Our most crucial pivot was adapting to a virtual world to ensure 2020's deliverables, as shall become clear to you in this Annual Report.

OUR INNOVATION CONTINUUM



19

Teams
AKU-Hack V5.0

1441

Hackers
Jugaar Innovation Challenge

120,000

Rupees
Incubation awards

Our priorities for 2021

- Execute events as planned, including a community-based Hackathon, an Ignite session and STE(a)M detox.
- Innovation Fellowship V2.0.
- Speaker and Ideation Series V3.0.
- Further iterations of our incubation program.
- Expand the health innovation narrative past AKU through an entirely do novo and novel approach.

Our long term strategic objectives

- Keep aspiring towards a quasi-virtual safe space for individuals to ideate and create through multiple independent ventures.
- Continue to inspire and change mindsets at the individual level, as to promote a culture of *innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship* (ICE) within the health and development spaces.

Research and Communication

- Two innovation-based grants submitted.
- Two research publications in *BMJ Innovations* and one in the journal *Pediatric Research*.
- Twenty five blogs were posted on *Hikaye*, our online blog.
- Work started and sustained for half a year, on CCIT's envisioned '*book of innovation*' describing its journey into low cost ICE for LMICs.

Incubation

- *ResQvent*, low-cost portable ventilator prototype in development.
- Participation of four teams in national entrepreneurship competition at Dawood University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi.
- One of our student-led startups, *Rinder*, won the '*she loves tech*' competition at a regional level.
- Five teams developed their MVPs (from the SPE incubation cohort).
- *Incubation Cohort 7* was conducted with the philosophy of helping participants to package their ideas in early-stage solutions.
- The CEO of our startup *PFIN* received pediatric research investigator award from the journal *Nature*.

Systems Innovation

- Successfully completed a first-of-its-kind innovation assessment of Mukhtar A Sheikh Hospital in Multan, Pakistan, using a checklist and survey tool for health innovation benchmarking.
- Discussions on incorporating innovative practice at a system level with two US-based organizations: Development Alternatives Incorporated (*DAI*) and Environment Health and Safety (*EHS*) partnerships.

Education

- *School Preparedness for Emergencies (SPE)* - AKU Hackathon V5.0: A total of 19 teams presented their ideas of team-based innovations aimed at solving problems pertinent to environmental disasters, terrorist, or pandemic-mediated school-based emergencies in LMICs.
- *Jugaar Innovation Challenge (JIC) for COVID-19*: AKU's first entirely virtual Hackathon had 42 submissions, and over 1000 community members. Innovations were aimed at solving problems pertinent to the COVID-19 pandemic, without a clear end in sight.
- *ICE*: AKU's first entirely virtual course teaching ICE-based skillsets for transcending the pandemic; 35 learners actively engaged with the team of 10 facilitators over eight weeks for this unique course.
- *Incubation Cohort 7*: Catered to biomedical and mental health teams, and in total had 17 participants. Due to the excellent commitment and potential for scale demonstrated by three of the teams participating, the forum decided to award completing teams with rupees 120K worth of tech related vouchers.
- *Innovation Fellowship V1.0*: AKU's first ever health innovation fellowship enrolled its inaugural batch of four fellows from very different professional backgrounds and saw it successfully end, in spite of the pandemic's chaos.

Outreach

- Eight speaker sessions conducted with an average attendance of 45 people per session.
- Five extempore ideation sessions conducted.
- Narrative medicine scale up with *VCAST online*, a digital media hub.
- Five thousand followers on social media channels with 6,000 views and comments.

RISE-0 : from the ashes the phoenix emerges!