

# Advancing Equity in Education

## Student Financial Assistance, Pakistan Annual Report 2020



# Ensuring Equitable Access to Education

At the Aga Khan University (AKU), we are committed to meeting the needs of talented students for whom a world-class education would not be possible without financial assistance. We welcome the sharpest minds and boldest thinkers—future leaders in a growing variety of fields. A guiding principle of the university is that cost should not prevent the best students from embarking on an educational path that will change the course of their lives.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, we cover more than 75% of the need demonstrated by students who require financial assistance, enabling us to attract many talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds and remote areas.

An AKU education changes the lives of young men and women of great promise. We are grateful for your support in enabling them as they develop the skills and knowledge they need to make a lasting impact on the world.





# Responding to the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges worldwide and had a particularly serious impact on students. Like most universities across the globe, AKU's campuses in Pakistan were closed in March 2020, in an effort to help contain the spread of the virus. To ensure that students could continue their education, AKU leveraged its substantial experience in blended learning and rapidly shifted to online instruction, drawing on global best practices. Within two months, all AKU programmes shifted to online courses, minimising the disruption to our students' education. Beginning in September 2020, AKU began welcoming students back on campus in phases.

While the impact of COVID-19 cannot be fully measured, your support for student financial assistance has enabled many students to continue their education, in spite of the uncertainty and economic hardships their families may be experiencing, so that they can become the next generation of leaders in healthcare and education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, AKU introduced a number of initiatives to support our students, particularly those from lower-income households and isolated areas in Pakistan.

These included:

- subsidising the cost of transportation for students to return home
- providing additional internet connection bundles
- sending teaching materials on USB to students with limited internet connectivity

In addition, once students returned to campus, AKU provided regular COVID-19 testing to ensure their safety. Safe quarantine beds were also provided to students who contracted COVID-19.

Your generous support made all of this possible.





## The Impact of Your Gift

**6,720**

Applicants to AKU Pakistan in 2020

**384**

Incoming students in 2020

**623m**

PKR disbursed in financial assistance in 2020

**64%**

Students on financial assistance in AKU, Pakistan

**79%**

Average percentage of need met per student in AKU, Pakistan

**581%**

Percentage growth in our financial assistance programme in 10 years

**4.75b**

PKR disbursed in financial assistance since inception (1983) to students in Pakistan





## Educating Tomorrow's Leaders

All of AKU's schools, colleges and institutes are unified in one goal: to graduate professionals with integrity who will go on to make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of the developing world and beyond.

### **The School of Nursing and Midwifery (SONAM)**

Established in 1980 in Karachi, SONAM was AKU's first academic unit. It's vision: to raise the standard and status of the nursing profession in Pakistan. Since then, SONAM has consistently set new educational and professional standards in the country. Today, SONAM graduates not only provide compassionate, high-quality patient care, but are also viewed as healthcare experts and nursing scholars in every community where they work.

SONAM was the first nursing school in Pakistan to introduce degree programmes in nursing and midwifery at undergraduate and graduate levels. The programmes are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to provide exemplary nursing care that is suited to the health needs of urban and rural populations in hospitals and communities in the developing world.

### **The Medical College**

The Aga Khan University Medical College was founded in 1983 and has continually expanded and enhanced its programmes in order to offer students medical training on par with the best schools in the region and the world.

Students at every stage of their training learn in state-of-the-art facilities, providing them with critical hands-on experience. Clinical skills are taught from the very first year, including taking medical history, performing physical examinations, gathering data, and making evidence-based decisions.

In addition, what sets apart the programmes at the Medical College is the emphasis on public health, ethics and communications skills. This means that every graduate possesses not only the scientific acumen to be an effective health professional, but a sensitivity to the health needs of the developing world and the motivation to treat all patients with dignity and empathy.

## The Institute for Educational Development (IED)

IED is a national leader in training educators, educational managers, researchers and policy makers. Through a range of graduate and continuing education programs, IED directly and indirectly influences the practice of an estimated 36,000 educational professionals in Pakistan, as well as in other developing nations in South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa.

The Institute currently offers Masters, MPhil, and PhD programmes in education, as well as professional development courses for working educators. It is also a hub of ground-breaking research, exploring topics ranging from classroom teaching methods to national educational policies and governance.

The vast majority of graduates continue to work in jobs in the field of education. Many of them are serving in academic leadership positions, such as advisors, ministers, managers, teacher educators, school principals, researchers and heads of academic institutions and NGOs.





# Student Profiles

*Zahira Khalifan, final year student in AKU's Master of Science in Nursing programme*



"While I was applying for my master's, I was the primary breadwinner for my family. I was worried about how I would balance my financial responsibilities with my dream of higher studies in nursing. I was fortunate to receive financial assistance for my first year and my good grades meant that I received a full scholarship in my second year."

"The scholarship didn't just give me financial support. It gave me the confidence that I could achieve anything. It's changed my perspective on what's possible and I'm now more open to applying for opportunities in any field."



# Student Profiles



## *Job Otieno, second year student in AKU's Associate of Science in Dental Hygiene programme*

"Money was the single biggest worry in my life," recalls Job Otieno, 25, an international student who is one of many to have received financial assistance to study at AKU in Karachi.

Before coming to the University's Karachi campus from Nairobi, Job remembers how monetary challenges were a constant barrier to him moving ahead in life; "I used to feel stuck," Job says. "I could only do what was important in the moment and could never plan for the future."

Job's life took a turn for the better when he started work as a housekeeper at the Aga Khan University Hospital's dental clinic in Nairobi. Even though life was still hard with rent and commuting costs covering the majority of his salary, his job exposed him to an environment that provided regular inspiration.

"People would come to the clinic in pain, but they would leave with big smiles," remembers Job. Being around people who were striving to help others appealed to him, and Job began seriously considering higher studies in dental hygiene.

After speaking to the clinic's manager and Judy Mwangi, a graduate of AKU's Associate of Science in Dental Hygiene programme who is now working as a dental hygienist at the University's teaching hospital in Nairobi, Job decided to apply and requested financial aid.

He still remembers the day he got the news he'd been admitted and the relief he felt on hearing that he had received 75 per cent financial assistance. "I used to feel like I was carrying a huge load on a long, uncertain journey. Then someone came along, took off the load and just dropped me off at my destination. That's what financial aid did for me, it left me completely humbled and renewed my optimism about the future."

# Our Commitment to Excellence

At the Aga Khan University, we aim to improve quality of life in developing nations. Through world-class teaching and research, we educate students for local and global leadership. We promote pluralism, gender equity, and economic justice in the global south and beyond.

Founded in 1983 as Pakistan's first private university, AKU is a not-for-profit institution. Starting in 2000, the University expanded to Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan, and the United Kingdom. Over the years we have also initiated programmes in teacher education, the study of Muslim civilisations, journalism, early childhood development and public policy. In the near future, we will launch an undergraduate liberal-arts programme and establish additional graduate professional schools.

In the words of our founder and Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan, our goal is to be "on the frontiers of scientific and humanistic knowledge, radiating intelligence and confidence, research and graduates, into flourishing economies and progressive legal and political systems."





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