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Transforming Pedagogy through Audio Visual Aid: An Accomplishment at the Aga Khan University, Karachi

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Abstract:

In the developing world, the Aga Khan University (AKU) is the only university which has the presence in eight countries. Besides having a network of eleven libraries, it has audio visual and learning resource centres (AV-LRCs) in each campus as a part of AKU libraries' network. Equipped with modern facilities like a shooting studio, large format printing plotters, and other facilities, the AV-LRC in AKU Karachi serves the community with the aim to provide high quality audio-visual support to the faculty, students and staff in their research, teaching and co-curricular events. Digital design, photography, video production, audio visual library, learning resource centre and equipment borrowing are some of the services and functions of this department. Digital photography, large-size researcher poster design and printing, video recording and editing, researcher poster carrier and equipment borrowing have been the top five services in the last five years. The objective of this paper is to introduce this unique service being provided to support research and teaching at AKU, so that other libraries can get the benefit of our experience and can setup similar, or even better, facilities in their respective institutions.

Keywords 1. Audio visual aids 2. Pedagogy 3. Learning Resource Centre

Introduction:

There is a tremendous rise on the use of audio-visual aid in education. A number of research studies indicates that the use of AV aid help to achieve a positive outcome in education. One of the studies proves that the use of video demonstrations vs conventional teaching has an identical effect, but the video classes reduces the training time and financial cost (Lu Y, 2015).

Research indicates that AV aid can also be useful in-patient teaching and treatment (Ayasrah SM, 2016). The Audio-Visual department at the Aga Khan University has been contributing to achieve the similar goal.

The aim of this case study is to share the experience and knowledge in the development and growth of University's vital unit 'Audiovisual Centre.'

Aga Khan University:

The Aga Khan University (AKU) was chartered by Government of Pakistan in 1983, AKU is a private, autonomous university that promotes human welfare through research, teaching and community service. The university develops academic programs in accordance with its core values quality, access, impact and relevance. The university has campuses in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United Kingdom with the following facilities:

Teaching hospitals (Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania)

Medical Colleges and Nursing Schools (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda)

▪ Institutes for Educational Development (Pakistan, Tanzania)

- Examination Board (Pakistan)
- Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations (London, UK)
- Faculties of Arts and Sciences – in developing phase (Pakistan)
- Faculties of Arts and Sciences – in developing phase (Tanzania)

AKU Libraries and Learning Resource Centres:

AKU has a network of eleven libraries and learning resource centres located in five countries over three continents. The network provides a comprehensive information resource of multi- discipline in print and digital formats.

The network has recently developed an Institutional Repository (IR) that provides opportunity to the researcher to archive publications in digital format for an instant access to the community.

Audio visual and Learning Resource Centre (AV-LRC), Karachi:

The under-discussion Audio Visual department at Aga Khan University, Karachi was established in 1985. The aim department was to provide high quality audiovisual support to the faculty, students, researchers and staff for teaching and research purposes. The department started operation with limited resources, providing AV aid to the users in teaching, helping in the visual content development, recording lectures, providing AV related equipment. Now the unit has become a vital support to the academic and research programmes.

AV-LRC at Faculty of Health Sciences, Karachi:

Being situated at main campus of the AKU at Stadium Road, Karachi, the audio visual department provide active support to the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) in many areas, such as designing of graphs, illustrations, research posters, flyers, brochures, banners, developing multimedia presentations, teaching and training videos, live video transmissions of surgical procedures, scanning of document, images and 35mm slides, printing of academic and research content including research posters, research reports, book titles, flyers brochures, etc.

AV-LRC at Institute of Educational Development, Karachi:

The department also has a complete AV unit at the AKU-Institute of Educational Development (IED) campus, Karim Abad, Karachi, to support faculty in their academic programs. This AV unit offers technical support by installing and maintaining various audiovisual equipment such as laptop computers, multimedia projectors, OHPs, Voice recorders, PA systems for presentation and teaching purposes. The unit also records videos and covers the photography tasks of various indoor/outdoor projects.

Support Services:

The Audio-Visual department offers following services to the faculty, students, researchers and staff.

- Learning Resource Centre
- Audio Visual Library
- Digital Designing
- Photography
- Video Production

Equipment Borrowing Learning Resource Centre:

Learning Resource Centre (LRC) was added in the university in 1995 considering the need of computer lab for student, faculty and staff. Users are encouraged to use this facility for teaching, research and for other departmental activities. Presently, the Learning Resource Centre has over 80 workstations. Printing and scanning facility is also provided at LRC. The Centre opens 14.5 hours a day, six days a week.

All students have free internet access in LRC. The center also conducts computer courses and workshops for AKU faculty, student and staff.

Audio Visual Library:

Audiovisual library section has a big collection of over 1,500 videos, CDs, slide atlases, sound slide programs. TV and VCR/DVD sets and slide viewers are placed in LRC to view this collection. The collection is comprised of local and imported material. For easy and fast access to the collection, links to the catalogue is available on AKU intranet.

Digital Designing:

The creative team of this section provides total designing and multimedia production solutions, using computer applications such as Adobe Suite, Sony software collection etc., produces high quality posters, banners, brochures, flyers, illustrations, graphs, 2D/3D animations, multimedia presentations and CD/DVD authoring.

This section also has a variety of scanners such as flatbed scanner, 35mm slide scanner and an X-ray scanner to digitize the material. A wide range of color printing from A0-A8, B0-B10 sizes and large size banners from 3 feet to 100 feet available using large format color plotter; this facility makes AV-LRC unique with other libraries. Lamination service of ID cards up to A3 size is also available.

Photography:

An experienced team of photographers has been contributing in many areas such as photography of teaching, research and social events, this includes workshops, seminars and conferences, operating room procedures, clinical activities, marketing campaigns, construction activities, musical and social evenings.

A special service of this section is Fluorescent Angiography which is only one of its kinds in Karachi. Recently, a proper studio for digital photography and for video production has been setup. Additionally, this section has grown by acquiring photo quality color printers for in house photo printing.

Video Production:

Video section produces documentaries, teaching/training, orientation and promotional films using high definition cameras and latest editing suite. This section also covers workshops, seminars, conferences, operating room procedures, clinical activities, marketing campaigns, construction activities, and musical and social evenings. The facility of digital sound recording and editing, digitization of video tape films is also available.

Equipment Borrowing:

Audio Visual library provides the facility to borrow equipment such as multimedia projectors, laptop computers, slide projectors, overhead projectors, slide viewers, TV and DVD players, projection screens, digital voice recorders, slide changers etc. to be used for teaching and learning purposes. The following top 10 equipment are available for borrowing within AKU premises:

S. No.	Equipment	Numbers
1	Multimedia Projectors	45
2	Laptops	46
3	Overhead Projectors	05
4	35 mm Slide Projectors	02
5	35 mm Slide Viewers	02
6	Projection Screens	09
7	Laser pointers	04
8	Slide Changers	04
9	Poster Carrier	05
10	Televisions	09

Transforming pedagogy through Teaching and research:

To support teaching and research, the department has produced a number of videos training programs, documentaries and has helps in the publications of research material.

Resources:

The department is equipped with state-of-the-art digital cameras of up to 36-megapixel range, high definition video cameras with professional video production equipment, high resolutions and large format color printers. To compete with the ongoing technological growth the department acquires latest equipment every year.

Staff:

It is important for any of the technical support unit to have a highly skilled team. The AV-LRC team has a variety of skill sets including graphic designing, storyboard designing, film direction and editing, animations, photography and publication/printing expertise. In addition, IT support skills are also available for Learning Resource Centre users.

Conclusion/recommendations:

Audio visual and learning resource centres play a vital role in supporting the educational institution mission. Considering an impact of this department, a progress should be made to introduce audio visual support units in Pakistani universities.

Taking the role model of Aga Khan University, small units may be established with limited resources and be funded every year for their growth.

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