



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

eCommons@AKU

AKU Newsletters

Publications

7-1-2008

AKU Newsletter : July 2008, Volume 9, Issue 1

Aga Khan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.aku.edu/aku_newsletter

Recommended Citation

Aga Khan University, "AKU Newsletter : July 2008, Volume 9, Issue 1" (2008). *AKU Newsletters*. Book 7.
http://ecommons.aku.edu/aku_newsletter/7

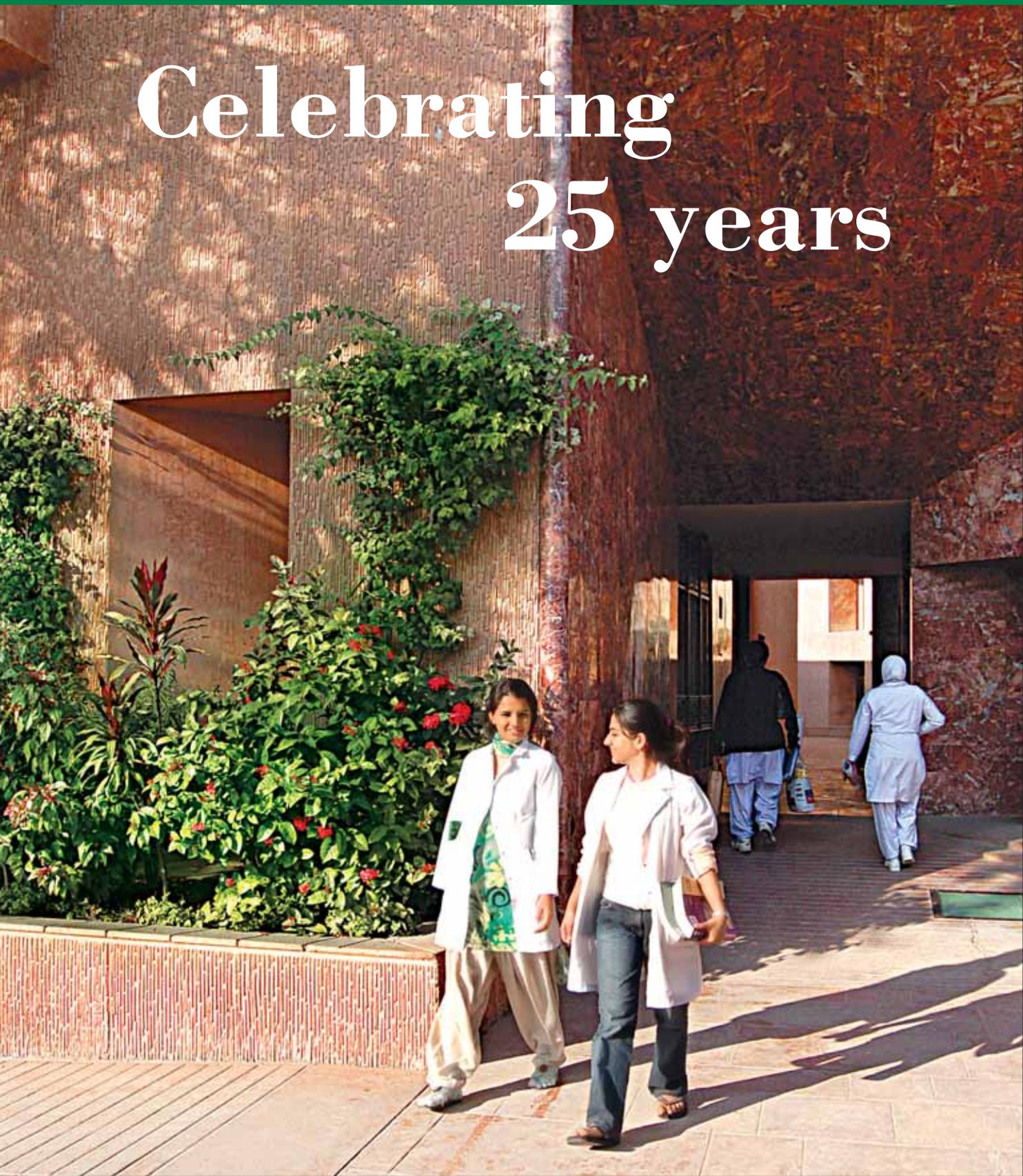
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Newsletter



JULY 2008

Vol. 9, No. 1

Celebrating
25 years



Education First



Chris Robb, Brian Felesky and Jim Gray with students of Ali Hassan Mwinyi Primary School

Tin-roofed huts dot the road to the town centre in Zanzibar. Groups of children run out of the shacks to wave at the bus passing through lush green fields dotted with palms. The travellers, a group of Canadian businessmen on a visit to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, are pensive in response.

The contrast between their country and this place is stark. Canada ranks fourth on the UN Human Development Index. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania rank 148, 154 and 159 respectively. Poverty, lack of education and poor infrastructure impede progress. In Canada, the average income per person is US\$ 33,375. In Uganda, with the highest per capita income in East Africa, it is US\$ 1,454. Kenya's per capita income is even lower at US\$ 1,240 and in Tanzania, it is a dismal US\$ 744.

Recognising the need for sustainable development in the region, a group of Canadian businessmen have started the Awali – which means ‘beginning’ in Swahili – project. Awali’s founding members, Jim Gray, Brian Felesky, Chris Robb, Ruth Ramsden-Wood and Sherali Saju, have pledged to support AKU’s Institute for Educational Development (IED), East Africa in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. IED aims to be a centre of excellence in educational and educator professional development complementing government initiatives to improve the quality of education in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. The group was visiting East Africa to see first-hand the results of their efforts.

The Awali group have committed to raising Cdn\$ 5 million towards the Cdn\$ 25 million total cost of

IED, East Africa. At the same time, they have secured a matching contribution of Cdn\$ 5 million from the Canadian International Development Agency; the remaining Cdn\$ 15 million are to be raised by AKU and other donors. IED will solidify Aga Khan University’s efforts to improve the quality of education in East Africa by building the skills and capacity of teachers and school administrators. For without competent teachers, school infrastructure such as buildings, desks and books mean little. “Africa is the world’s poorest region,” says

Professor Gordon MacLeod, former director of the Institute in Dar es Salaam. The only solution for eradicating poverty and hopelessness is education. “One extra year of schooling for a girl can dramatically affect her learning capacity and her health,” he pointed out.

Uganda and the other East African nations adopted the UN goal of universal primary education – getting all young children in school – 10 years ago. Statistics show that the primary school enrolment rate is high but declines rapidly towards secondary school. For Kenya, for example, the net primary enrolment rate was 79 per cent in 2005 while the secondary enrolment rate was 42 per cent in the same year, almost half. The average teacher in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania earns about US\$ 100 a month after taxes. Schools are under-funded and some are forced to shut down.

IED’s student teachers are benefiting from these efforts to invest in quality professional development. They feel that they are able to communicate more effectively with children through innovative and creative teaching methods, and some teachers are able to assist in school improvement, for instance, by sharing their experiences with other teachers in the school.

Brian Felesky emphasises that supporting education in the under-developed regions of the world is essential for the global business community. “Education reduces poverty, and if you don’t (take) care of poverty abroad, poverty comes to us in the form of violence and other desperations,” says Felesky. “This is absolutely vital work.”

Hungry for Life

The University's Department of Paediatrics and Child Health identified a gap in understanding the determinants and interventions for maternal and childhood mortality, mustered a global research team and funding to analyse the issue and developed strategies to manage the problem. The findings on maternal and childhood undernutrition, given the current global food crisis, received widespread media and public health attention.

Each year around the world, close to 10 million children die before reaching their fifth birthday – and almost a third of them from hunger and undernutrition. Of the half million annual maternal deaths, many are related to maternal undernutrition and anaemia and the subsequent birth of a small, undernourished baby.

Some children die simply because they do not have enough to eat, others are too weak to resist and recover from common diseases like diarrhoea. Those who do survive have been so deprived of nutrition during their critical developmental years that they do less well at school and poorly later in life, reducing their economic potential. Lower income, poor health and reduced access to proper nutrition then continue to impact the health of children born into future generations, leading to a repetitive cycle of poverty. Four-fifths of these undernourished children belong to just 20 countries across Asia and Africa, with half of them living in South Asia alone. Undernutrition may be the result of a poor diet with insufficient nutrients – but its effects are far-reaching.

Researchers from the University's Paediatrics and Child Health Department, led by Professor Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, noticed the lack of knowledge on undernutrition,

played a lead role in developing the concept to study



Four-fifths of undernourished children live in just 20 countries

the issue and obtained the funding for it. Over 18 months, AKU researchers coordinated six groups in various centres of excellence in Pakistan, UK, Brazil, USA, Bangladesh and India to undertake an extensive review of interventions with the potential to alleviate undernutrition. The findings were published in a landmark series of five research articles in *The Lancet* in the early part of this year. Startling facts appeared from these analyses:

- Poor breastfeeding and vitamin A and zinc deficiencies were responsible for more than one-third of all under-five child deaths. In fact, the window of

opportunity for preventing undernutrition is from the moment a child is conceived to two years of age.

- Poor growth in the womb, stunting and severe wasting in the first two years of life cause irreparable harm by impeding physical growth and – if followed by rapid weight gain in the 3-5 year age range – significantly increasing the risk of chronic diseases later in life.

- A short stature and iron deficiency anaemia increase the risk of death for the mother at delivery.
- Maternal undernutrition, including chronic energy and micronutrient deficiencies, is prevalent in many regions of the world especially in south-central Asia where 10 per cent to 19 per cent of women are undernourished. It is a serious problem in sub-Saharan Africa, south-central and south-eastern Asia and in Yemen where it affects 20 per cent of mothers and a critical issue in India, Bangladesh and Eritrea where 40 per cent of women are undernourished. The nutritional status of a woman before and during pregnancy is important for a pregnancy to end well.

But many of these deaths can be prevented through simple solutions. “Of the available interventions, counselling about breastfeeding, supplementation with vitamin A and zinc and appropriate management of severe acute malnutrition has the greatest potential to reduce the burden of maternal and child morbidity and mortality,” Professor Bhutta explains. Other solutions include supplementation of iron, micronutrients, iodine and calcium for pregnant women, universal salt iodisation and education about essential hand washing and hygiene practices for children. The authors estimate that universal coverage with a full package of proven interventions could prevent about one-quarter of child deaths under 36 months of age and reduce the prevalence of stunting at three years by about one-third.

The findings have led to a number of international initiatives with revitalisation of national nutrition strategies in many key target countries including India, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, South Africa and Peru.



Professor Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, bringing global attention to undernutrition

Given the high burden of maternal and child undernutrition and mortality, and the recent food crisis and price inflation, the solutions suggested are of special relevance for developing countries.

Given the high burden of maternal and child undernutrition and mortality, and the recent food crisis and price inflation, the solutions suggested are of special relevance for developing countries. Research and advocacy followed by solid action can make a difference to the lives of millions of malnourished women and children worldwide.

In collaboration with UNICEF and the Government of Pakistan, the University will host the launch of the undernutrition series coupled with a review of the national nutrition strategy in 2008; a similar launch is planned for Kenya in 2009.

Building on Strengths, Creating Bridges – William Doe, Provost

There are many well-established and older universities worldwide. What attracted you to AKU?

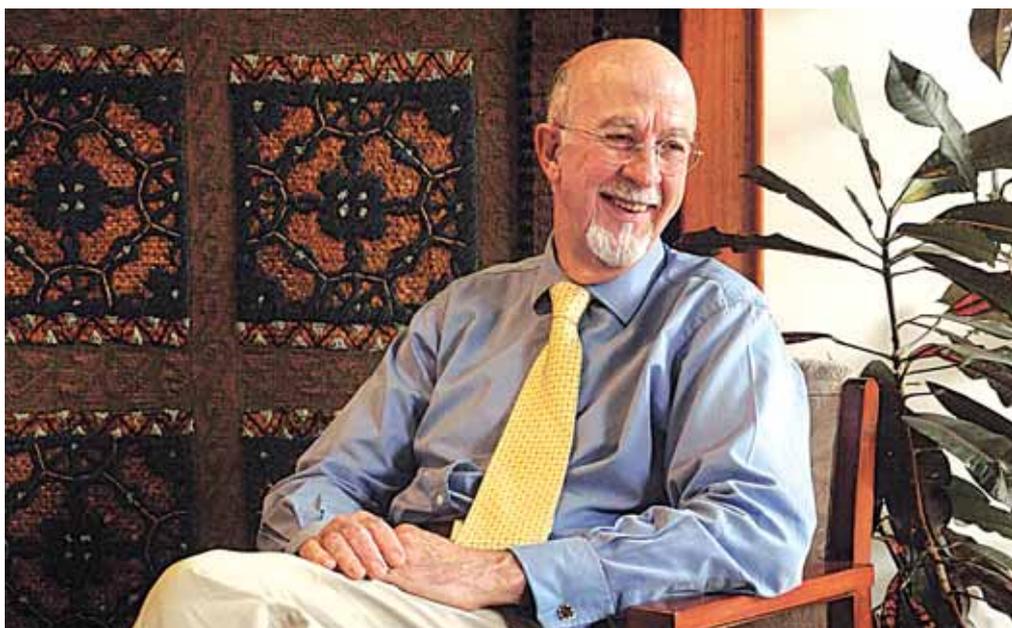
Ever since I went to New Guinea as a student, I have been interested in research that aims to drive forward improvements in health and health care in developing countries. This interest has been heightened by several short-term consultancies for the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme. But the vision of Aga Khan University and the reach of its campuses across South Asia and East Africa offer unique opportunities. Above all, it is the University's ethos, the prescription of education, tolerance and pluralism to create and defend civil society that I find compelling.

What are your future challenges as the Provost, given the University's international expansion plans?

The future challenges are many and complex. University governance and communication are amongst the most pressing concerns. A governance model and architecture that operates at both the international and regional/local levels needs to be developed. Wherever the campus is, the staff and students in that country need to feel part of the international AKU. Yet they also need to identify with the culture and country where they work; their local identity not only distinguishes them from those on an AKU campus in a different country but also contributes to the richness of the diversity that represents the truly international nature of Aga Khan University.

As a researcher with over 160 research publications in international scientific journals, how do you intend to align your research interests with your activities at the University?

As a specialist physician also trained in basic science, I divided my time between clinic and laboratory for many years. As my research group expanded however, I spent more time writing grant proposals and research papers and less time in the laboratory. But the emergence of "wet epidemiology", where surveys of populations include collection of blood specimens, and the advent of genomics have changed the research landscape. My research interests are now engaged in developing strategies to exploit the tremendous opportunities available in population-based research in developing countries, using genetic, social and clinical scientific approaches. For example, research into early childhood development using epigenetic analysis now enables researchers to study the effect of environmental influences, such as stress or nutritional deficiencies, on the ways genes function early in life. As Provost however,



"As AKU continues to mature, I foresee a world class University providing stimulating intellectual leadership in education, research and social change."

my contribution will be to the large-scale strategic picture, in helping to develop and fund studies of international significance in Pakistan and East Africa and perhaps, Central Asia that have as their purpose, better health and health care in developing economies.

What is the state of research and innovation in the developing world today?

Research and innovation into diseases that afflict developing countries have been transformed in the past decade. The shock of HIV-AIDS, the SARS virus and the threat of a human influenza pandemic due to bird flu have driven international agencies, western governments and charities to increase substantially their research into infectious diseases in many developing countries. This effort has also drawn fresh attention to their endemic problems of malaria, TB, leprosy and parasitic diseases which have long been underfunded for research. While this investment has produced some helpful research infrastructure, not enough is directed to building research capacity, for training health workers, scientists, technicians and public health workers in developing countries where there are critical shortages raising concerns about the future sustainability in these countries in the longer term.

What do you think are the key intellectual, cultural and social challenges faced by academicians in the developing world?

The key challenges are those of isolation, absence of academic infrastructure and lack of support for education and research such as access to libraries, teaching and laboratory facilities. The limited educational infrastructure, especially for tertiary education, the migration of talented academics and high level graduate technicians, often the best and brightest, to the developed world and the difficulty in recruiting must weigh heavily on those who remain. The struggle of living in those developing countries that have unstable or autocratic governments, where corruption is widespread and the rule of law compromised, itself imposes constraints on intellectual life, freedom of expression, social cohesion and cultural expression. In such societies, the difficulties in sustaining academic life are immense.

How far has the University fostered an enabling environment for research?

AKU has made remarkable progress during its first 25 years. The vibrant growth that characterised the first two decades needs new investment to maintain the momentum. Appropriately, during this first phase of development, the emphasis was on education, on graduating nurses and doctors, rather than on research. During the second decade, laboratories were built and clinical research encouraged. There has been a year on year increase in research activity and research output of international standard from a relatively small, but growing number of high-level researchers and grant income.

What is needed now is to resource research themes that represent the niche areas where AKU has opportunities to compete at the international level, to capture synergies between disciplines and to foster collaboration. AKU is poised, ready for a step change to world class research. This strategy would inform future recruitment so as to build on existing strengths and create bridges between successful groups. More emphasis on training PhD students, more determination to publish original research papers in international scientific journals is required. In nursing, research grants are now coming through and training in clinical trials and disciplines such as epidemiology are beginning to

broaden the research base. The Institutes for Educational Development have also embraced quantitative research methodology alongside their expertise in qualitative approaches in education research which would also benefit from more collaboration within the University and externally.

What role do you foresee for AKU in the society of the future?

As the University continues to mature, I foresee a world class

University providing stimulating intellectual leadership in education, research and social change and catalysing a knowledge-based economy in sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and beyond. The contribution of a liberal arts education will imbue AKU alumni with a more pluralistic and tolerant view of the world and their contributions to the arts, science and to the professions will foster support and leadership in the development of democracies, sustainable economies and civil societies.

What is needed now is to resource research themes that represent the niche areas where AKU has opportunities to compete at the international level, to capture synergies between disciplines and to foster collaboration.

Lighting the Lamp in Rural Africa



In an exciting new venture, AKU will now be able to offer nurses, hospital administrators and medical officers in the rural areas of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, a chance to upgrade their skills and credentials without leaving the workplace. This has become possible through a Lundin Foundation US\$ 1.2 million grant to extend the University's current nursing education programme. The Lundins are mining and oil and gas entrepreneurs who have recognised the need to ensure that benefits received from this sector are shared with local communities, to contribute toward improving the lives of the most impoverished in Africa.

AKU's Advanced Nursing Studies (ANS) programme in East Africa currently offers continuing and higher education to working nurses using a flexible approach that allows them to continue employment while improving their qualifications. ANS provides practising nurses from private and government-run health facilities, who are mostly women, with opportunities to further their careers, improve incomes and develop leadership skills. It offers a range of programmes from an Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse conversion programme, Post-RN BScN and a clinical specialist programme. Since 2006, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

have provided distance learning through online modules and web-based support. The three-year grant will improve access to higher education and continuing education programmes for nurses from rural settings. AKU will expand the ANS programme to the rural areas by establishing three additional teaching sites: in Tanzania, in the Kwale district of Kenya and in northern Uganda. At the same time, AKU will introduce ANS in Ethiopia by establishing an ANS Resource Centre in Addis Ababa. Funding will target women and develop not only their professional skills but also their community leadership abilities. By helping prevent common diseases and by treating curable conditions

in their own settings, nurses will help communities realise their full potential and enhance their economic status. It will also contribute towards improving nursing practice and patient care at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in the public and private sectors. For each nurse trained, an average 4,000 patients per year will receive better quality of care. Since the programme will train 320 nurses annually, it is expected that 1.3 million patients yearly will receive better care.

International organisations, such as the World Health Organization, have emphasised the importance of creating regional universities and training programmes for health workers; people should not have to move to developed countries for education. AKU's training programmes in the region have demonstrated that once a base has been established, it is possible to reach out, recruit and educate people from countries around the region. For example, the University's School of Nursing in Karachi attracts students from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Egypt and Tajikistan for higher education in nursing. With the Lundin funds, AKU will be able to extend its reach even further, to nurture the nurse leaders in rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa.

Guerrilla Film Making: the Agony and the Ecstasy

A 'guerrilla' film maker is "one who may be short on money but not on passion and vision" and that is how Jamil Dehlavi described himself at the University's Special Lecture Series in Karachi in February.

An independent film maker, Dehlavi is the producer/director of critically acclaimed movies that have explored themes that often become topical talking points. His first feature film was the *Towers of Silence* in 1975. The film was shown at numerous international festivals and won the Grand Prize for the Best Experimental Film at the Festival of the Americas. Another, *Immaculate Conception*, explores the cultural clash between East and West through a childless American-English couple who visit a fertility shrine in Karachi with shocking consequences. The film won the Special Jury Prize at the Dinard Film Festival in France and was selected for Panorama in Berlin.

Films produced outside the domain of the big Hollywood studios (known as 'independent' or 'indie' films) are used by artistes as vehicles for free expression since financial obligations and big business economics do not control their content. Dehlavi presses for a return to the roots of film making as an art form separate from the economics of distribution and box office returns. "My life as a film maker has not been very different from that of a guerrilla fighter. I have spent it as an individual, acting independently and taking part in unconventional fighting against large conventional forces. I'm a survivor and I'm still going strong," he said.

Dehlavi elaborated on this theme by explaining the circumstances around some of his movies. His most famous film, *Blood of Hussain* got him into trouble with General Zia-ul-Haq's military dictatorship in 1977. The movie, completed shortly before General Zia came to power, is an abstract essay on tyranny – a fictional account of a military dictatorship and the revolutionary movement against it. He described how he was persecuted because of a misinterpretation of the film's message as inciting hatred against the military. This victimisation forced him to escape to

London where he landed with less than 100 pounds sterling in his pocket. After persuading a post production house to complete the film – on deferred payment – he managed to release the movie which earned him critical acclaim.

Dehlavi's other films include *Born of Fire*, *Passover* and *Jinnah* – the last a historical account on the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. *Jinnah*, says Dehlavi, was the most complicated film he has ever made since it was steeped in controversy. The film was completed despite financiers backing out of the project owing to a campaign against the film by a section of the press. "Nevertheless, *Jinnah* is a film I am proud of. It won awards at the Houston and the Flagstaff film festivals in the US and the Grand Prize at the Zanzibar International Film Festival."

"The economics of film have made film making a very expensive proposition for artistes, guerrilla or otherwise," said Dehlavi. Today film makers need to take advantage of new and inexpensive

technologies like digital video cameras, editing software and internet-based tools, using these technologies "to free oneself from the fear of budgets and the horror of being controlled, factors that more often than not kill creativity."

Dehlavi thinks broadband networks will also change the pattern of film distribution. With open access, major portals such as AOL Time Warner will be more inclined to provide a venue for guerrilla film makers to cater to new audiences. These audiences will be attracted through browser-like technologies that help people search for films and media. This will create a whole new dynamic for distribution as people take more responsibility for what they view and are less dependent on programmers and producers to pre-determine what they think an audience will respond to. "The content that will rule in this new world will not be the least common denominator-type programming seen until now. What will rule may very well be guerrilla film making," predicts Dehlavi.



An 'indie' film producer and director

A Quarter of a Century On

“March 16, 2008 is a milestone in the history of our University.

On that day, 25 years ago, the Aga Khan University received its Charter as a private international University.... In a short period, Aga Khan University has established a reputation for excellence and moved towards accomplishing its vision of impacting and improving the lives of many, not only within the Ummah but also in other societies. In just 25 years, the University expanded its academic programmes to eight countries: Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, Afghanistan, Egypt and Syria – representing a diversity of cultures and creeds.

“Today, the University offers international standard health care in Pakistan and East Africa. Its hospitals in Karachi and Nairobi are considered the best in their respective regions and role models emulated by other private and public institutions. AKU has assisted in raising teaching, research and service standards in medicine, nursing and teacher education in both rural and urban areas as rated by its peer institutions locally and internationally....

“Having established a strong foundation, the University has a solid platform to spring forward for the next stage of its growth....”

Excerpts from President Firoz Rasul's message on March 17, 2008 to AKU faculty, staff and students.



The University is creating the conditions necessary to become a leader in research



As part of the University's commitment to community service, each nursing and medical student must spend part of their time in under-served communities



The University is developing critical thinking skills in students by offering high-quality secondary and higher secondary school examinations

The University's next stage of growth will include new Faculties of Health Sciences and of Arts and Sciences in Nairobi and Arusha respectively, in addition to an Institute for Educational Development in Dar es Salaam and a Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Karachi – exponential expansion in the next 10 years. The Faculty of Health Sciences will focus on medical and nursing education; the Faculty of Arts and Sciences on imparting a liberal arts programme and the Institute on teacher education. If the challenge in the first decade was to establish a national institution and in the second, an institution with international outreach and impact, the test in the third decade is to expand from providing professional education in medicine and teacher development, to a university that offers a comprehensive liberal arts education that covers, among other subjects, the social sciences, sciences, economics and information technology. Making the situation more demanding, the University will have to consolidate its position as an international university albeit with a strong national presence in the countries in which it serves.

This international growth will allow the University the space to promote pluralism, cosmopolitanism that is essential for survival and harmony in a global world. Multi-country campuses offer students the opportunity to learn with others, to engage in discussion and to find a common



The Institutes for Educational Development, in Pakistan and East Africa, offer professional development opportunities to teachers



Students taking the pledge to honour the nurses' international code of ethics



language for dialogue, to be part of a diverse humanity of different faiths, cultures and experiences.

For this to happen, AKU will continue to be accessible to meritorious students, irrespective of their national or ethnic background. Only then can it produce leaders, be they a nurse returning home to Chitral, Pakistan equipped with a Master's degree or an alumna engaged in collaborative medical research at the global level. The University's graduates will continue to be testimony to its aim to produce people who can influence society, today and in the future.

However, society can only progress if discussions about the future are based on informed choices. AKU remains committed to engaging in medical and educational research that has won it international recognition while contributing to addressing national and global problems. As the Faculties of Arts and Sciences grow, other areas of concern to human development will emerge: architecture and human settlement; economic growth and development; government, civil society and public policy; law; leisure; management of both business and social sector organisations; media and communications; science and technology; and education for human development that will require systematic thought and information that can impact on public policy.



The Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations focuses on research studies and teaching on the heritage of Muslim societies

The University will continue with its commitment to advance public policy to respond to the real needs of communities. Dialogues between local, provincial and national agencies and bilateral aid institutions on educational testing, nutrition, maternal and child health, immunisation strategies and vaccine development and epidemiology will continue. This informed discourse is taking place not only in Pakistan, East Africa and the Middle East but is impacting on global discussions particularly on maternal and child health and its implications in meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals to reduce child mortality and to improve maternal health by 2015.

The University is also expanding in a century where knowledge is driving transformation and success. Universities as seats of learning must be part of a global knowledge culture or face the risk of being left behind. And that is why, in the Chancellor's own words, Aga Khan University must be ready to embrace "the values of collaboration and coordination, openness and partnership, choice and diversity – which will under-gird the Knowledge Society, learning constantly to review and revise and renew what we think we know – learning how to go on learning." He also said the University "must make the years ahead a time to broaden our networks, broaden our teaching and broaden our geographic reach."

All in all, the University must continue to strive for its values of quality, access, relevance and impact that have served it well in the first



The University offers international standard health care in Pakistan and East Africa

quarter century of its existence as it continues to establish its identity as a modern university that can proudly stand in the intellectual traditions of Islam while making its own distinctive contributions to the dialogue of humanity and the knowledge society of the future.



The University's alumni often return to serve in their communities

Twice Blessed

Toryalai has reason to smile. Close to the brink of death, he was twice blessed: to be treated at the French Medical Institute for Children (FMIC) in Kabul – a private, non-profit health institution managed by Aga Khan University since 2006 – and to be under care when a specialist who could treat his condition happened to be visiting the Institute.

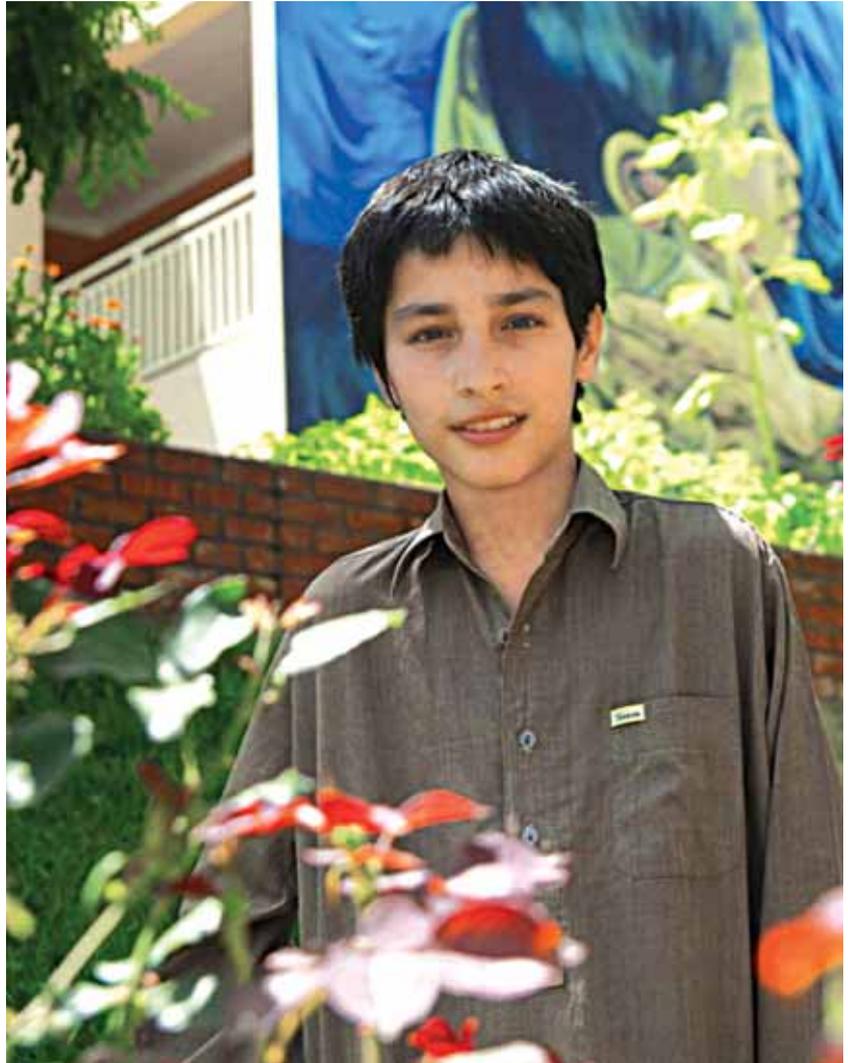
Only 12, Toryalai travelled a long way from his home in Kunduz province, in north-eastern Afghanistan, to a private clinic in Kabul where he was first diagnosed with a chest disease. Unable to help him, they sent him to a public hospital for specialist treatment. A month and a half later, with no prognosis in hand, still ill and getting worse, he was referred to FMIC's Intensive Care Unit. It took a team of doctors headed by FMIC's resident paediatrician to discover what was wrong. Toryalai had pleural disease that was reducing the effectiveness of his right lung. With an accurate diagnosis finally in hand, Toryalai was treated and sent home.

Unfortunately for the boy, he was sick again. He had to return to FMIC following a recurrence of pneumothorax, a collapsed lung. This time a new attempt to drain the largest cavity failed and surgery became the last option to treat this problem – Toryalai lay precariously close to death. But no surgeon in Afghanistan had the competency to perform this surgery on their own. This time around, however, Toryalai had a stroke of luck. A French cardiac surgeon was visiting FMIC at the time and was able to perform the complicated surgery.

It was another two months – 60 days in hospital – before Toryalai was well enough to be discharged. His family had faced an emotional toll; they now faced a financial one, as the extended stays and complicated surgery and treatment had escalated the medical bill enormously. It was covered through FMIC's patient welfare programme. His father was most vocal in expressing his feelings: "We came close to losing the most valuable thing in our family and FMIC gave him back to us. Toryalai is our little

miracle child and we thank all the nurses and the doctors for making everything available for our child. We are poor and we could not afford this kind of treatment but we did not have to worry about anything."

Like Toryalai, many of the children admitted to



In 2007, over 10,000 patients at FMIC received financial assistance

FMIC suffer from life-threatening conditions. They are treated irrespective of their ability to pay their bills. In 2007, over 10,000 patients received financial assistance worth almost US\$ 1.4 million. In 2008, close to 2,900 admissions with over 1,000 surgeries including 200 cardiac surgeries will be performed and there will be many more stories of how FMIC is able to put a smile back on the faces of the children of Afghanistan.

Meeting the Challenges of Reconstruction

On 8 October 2005, global attention was drawn to South Asia following a 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck northern Pakistan and parts of India. The scale of destruction was enormous and His Highness the Aga Khan made a pledge that agencies and affiliates of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), including AKU, would support multi-dimensional rehabilitation and reconstruction work. The government's Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority assigned responsibility of two areas to AKDN: the 5,000-household valley of Chakhama in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Garhi Habibullah town in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). In AJK, the Network initiated a large scale Multi-Input Earthquake Reconstruction Programme; in the NWFP, the interventions are much smaller and focused on education only.

Two and a half years on, Chakhama valley residents are benefiting from 30 temporary shelters for 20 schools which are still awaiting permanent buildings and where community members have been organised to build these structures. Of the 45 public schools in the valley, AKDN is also rebuilding four schools to demonstrate seismic resistant construction techniques in locations which are safe from other hazards. Over 150 teachers, head teachers and education officers in the valley have or will receive 12 days of formal training by the Programme's education team, with technical backstopping by AKU's Institute for Educational Development and the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan. Five Early Childhood Education and Development Centres have been initiated as pilot projects to provide quality education to young children to prepare them for entry into formal schools. Learning Resource Centres have been set-up in two schools to provide support to teachers and students alike, with one centre

even providing access to information technology through its computer lab. For the households in the valley, this has been a major step, with improved learning opportunities for the children in the area and through them, the larger community.

In Garhi Habibullah, the scope is much smaller with initiatives focused on five schools assigned by the

government earthquake authority. The Institute's interventions are at several levels. It is developing the capacity of teachers, head teachers and government officials from the Education Department. The team is also working closely with school communities to improve basic facilities in the schools and to provide a safe learning environment. Reviving Parent-Teacher Associations has encouraged greater parent and community participation in the schools, with more support now forthcoming for education in the area.



Students have been encouraged to participate in the teaching and learning process

The Institute has also encouraged students' participation in the teaching and learning process and in developing their own leadership skills through creative activities. A mobile library scheme has been started in the schools to encourage children to read books outside the prescribed textbooks. Teachers are also being provided with important reference books to enrich the existing curriculum. Another plan is to establish a Teaching Learning Resource Centre in the government middle school in Garhi Habibullah to serve as a hub of continuous professional development for teachers and head teachers.

Although the earthquake of 2005 will remain in people's memories as a disaster of epic proportions, AKU has worked to create opportunity out of tragedy. And the success of its programmes speaks to the resilience and strength of the communities it serves.

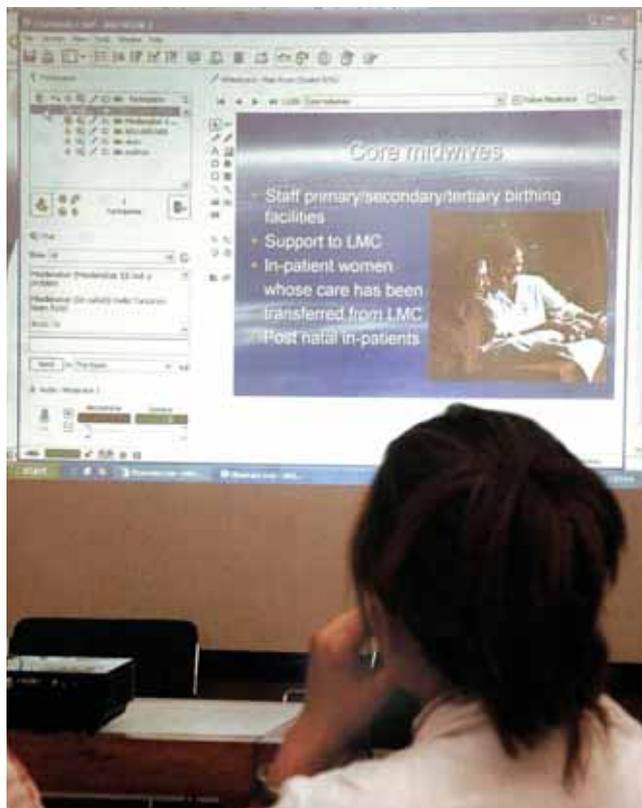
Connection, Cooperation

“It was 9 a.m. on a Monday morning in Karachi. My graduate level students had gathered for a research seminar that Dr Stacie Lyons and I were jointly teaching through Elluminate Live! The time was 10 p.m. in Iowa as Stacie logged on and our amazing e-learning session began with one teacher sitting on the other side of the world,” says Dr Rafat Jan, Associate Professor at Aga Khan University School of Nursing.

E-learning is literally revolutionising learning, allowing specialist knowledge and experience to be shared around the globe. Dr Lyons expressed her views “Teaching AKU graduate nursing students via Elluminate was a humbling experience. It’s one thing to read how the nursing shortage in the United States affects the balance of nurses globally. It’s an entirely different thing to hear about the impact of our national nursing crisis directly from the nurse managers and educators in Pakistan who are struggling to graduate adequate numbers of knowledgeable nurses to staff local hospitals and clinics, only to lose them to the US health care system. This chance to engage in dialogue with these students really changed my perspectives on the nursing shortage.”

This experience is possible courtesy of a donation of software and equipment worth US\$ 2.53 million from Elluminate, a Calgary-based technology company. Elluminate Live! software is specially designed for distance education and collaboration amongst educational institutions and simulates a virtual classroom environment. It allows students and their teachers to engage in (almost) synchronous audio conversations supplemented with full screen presentations, an interactive whiteboard, text messaging and, on occasion, live videos.

AKU’s Advanced Nursing Studies (ANS) programme in East Africa is also engaged in regular training and mentorship sessions via Elluminate for health workers who live and practice near the various ANS Distance Learning Resource Centres in East Africa. This is to bridge the ‘know-do’ gap, to support health workers in translating knowledge gained during their studies into action. The programme is also collaborating with the School of Nursing of Nottingham University in the UK, the University of Iowa in the US and WHO to improve nursing education and practice in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. A key part of the project is e-learning with the UK and US universities supporting nursing curriculum design and development through the sharing of knowledge resources and online teaching.



E-learning allows specialist knowledge and experience to be shared around the globe

The University’s School of Nursing is using e-learning for continuing education sessions from Karachi for nurses in Afghanistan, East Africa and Egypt. Dr Fatima Mohbat Ali who looks after AKU programmes in Afghanistan was enthusiastic about her experiences. “For the first time we were able to really involve the faculty of the [government-run] Institute of Health Sciences in Kabul in a session where none of them asked for travel or daily allowances! Sessions were interactive and the excitement of participants at our end was worth watching because we were sitting in Kabul and yet moving beyond the borders of Afghanistan for training.”

Using such software for teaching can impact students’ learning as well as encourage collaboration in teaching, practice and research within the nursing community at large. Borderless learning, seamless collaboration and the sharing of knowledge resources are significant steps to providing improved health care for people globally. E-learning has done wonders by connecting resources around the world – it is the way forward for AKU to increase its educational outreach and impact.

Lucia Buyanza: A Beacon of Hope

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, Lucia Buyanza was raised in the slums of Pumwani and Kibera, the latter the second largest shanty town in Africa. Aspiring for more than the life of an average slum dweller, and supported by her father, she educated herself through college and beyond. After a Certificate of Nursing, she attained a Diploma in Registered Community Health Nursing from Aga Khan University, Kenya. Today, Buyanza continues to live in Kibera and works at the government Mbagathi Hospital in Nairobi. Through the worst of Kenya's post-election violence in early 2008, she continued to assist injured people.

What inspired you to enter the nursing profession?

In high school, I volunteered at a convent for two months, taking care of the elderly. I developed a close relationship with them and during this time I realised that I could help others, especially because of my own disadvantaged background. I also wanted people of the world to know about the issues we constantly face in the slums. As my contribution to my community, I knew I could either write the story of the people of Kibera or I could help them through health care. I began by obtaining my nursing certificate from the local medical training centre.

I soon learned that the young people of Kibera were involved in alcohol and drug abuse, early premarital relationships and abortions, and so on. I wanted to change this fate. I yearned to be an ambassador for my people and to serve as a role model for a younger generation. When I returned from school, I encouraged

other young people to push aside their fears and follow their dreams.

What was it like in Kibera, during the political crisis?

Working in Kibera, during the Kenyan crisis was one of my life's prime moments. When the violence first broke out, I was hesitant to go to work and was even trying to move out of Kibera. I remember walking down the street, in a place I thought of as home, when I met a rowdy group saying that they would kill a lot of my people. We were living in fear – when I would walk to the hospital, I was scared and always ready to hide. One day, the police came into the house and beat up my brother. They took his money and phone. When I came home, I found him crying in pain. We transferred him to my sister's house, to keep him out of danger. The most difficult part was leaving him everyday, when I left for work – unsure if I would return to find him safe.

One of the most trying times was in January, just after the political crisis.

When I would go to work at the hospital, only five nurses out of 35 would be on duty. Some had died amidst the violence and others were too afraid to travel to work. It was such a pathetic situation because we couldn't manage all the patients. My desire to leave Kibera vanished as I quickly realised that at the end of the day, these were my people and I wanted to be with them until the end, no matter what the situation. Each day, from then onwards, I worked late into the evening, burning the candle at both ends, but soon there



Lucia at work in the government Mbagathi Hospital

were more nurses who joined us to share the burden and lighten the load.

Since the elections, a dark sense of fear has settled amongst the people in the slums. But everyday, fear is replaced by hope.

There is no turning back from the bloodshed and violence to date, but our people are realising that we don't have to live like this. It will require strength and will power, but we can move forward ... and one day, it will be done.

Why did you decide to pursue studies at AKU?

When I saw the advertisement in the newspaper, I knew this was a unique institution. It was a school that sought to empower nurses and to enable them to provide quality nursing care in their own rural areas. It struck me as an institution that wanted the best for its students. When I first entered AKU, it was a new experience for me. I did not know how to react to an institution of higher learning, but was encouraged by the words of our teacher that we all were important people and that we were the ones who could change the face of nursing. We had the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of those who had worked hard to improve nursing standards.

The institution is very committed to learning. We studied in an excellent environment in which we received books compatible with international standards. Learning at AKU was also a personal affair – we were taught that anything was possible if we worked within a positive framework. Our education was not only about nursing, but about leadership and an overall social conscience. As a result, we have nurses that are valued within the health fraternity of each country. For these reasons, AKU is a powerful institution that can help create a new face for nursing in East Africa.

How did AKU enable you to achieve your career objectives?

The curriculum gave its students a holistic approach to learning. At AKU, one wasn't just a nurse, but a nurse who was given the capacity to nurture his or her other

talents. While at the University, I found I had a great gift for writing, which helps me in all aspects of my career today.

AKU presented us with many challenges, but



A good role model and an ambassador for young people in the slums

also allowed us freedom of expression in terms of nursing values. It pushed us to go one step ahead, in every aspect of our education. Consequently, I have been able to treat patients without fear. AKU shaped me to be a better leader wherever I am – be it in a hospital or in a social setting. It gave me a new-found strength of character and a desire to work towards a better life.

What are your plans for the future?

My deepest desire is to advance within the nursing profession to get a Master's degree, and eventually, a doctorate. I would also like to be a good role model and an ambassador for young people in the slums. I want them to know that there are no boundaries to achieving higher education; all one needs is a strong will.

I would also like to nurture my talent for writing. Ultimately, I would love to publish a book about my life's journey, and perhaps one day I will create a forum in which others like me can express their views.

After graduating from AKU, I have always wanted to give back to the community and do better for the institution, no matter where life takes me. AKU has inspired me in so many areas of my life and for this, I will forever be indebted to the institution and its endeavours.

Who Are We Learning Lessons From?

The refrain on the lips of most leaders of developing countries is how to fight poverty and ensure good governance. The models promoted by the West have often focused on encouraging democracy, but the results have not always been positive. Today, it is the Chinese and their model of development that is attracting attention. AKU's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations in collaboration with the London Middle East Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS),

University of London, held a seminar on Governance and Development that looked at the Chinese model of governance and at models from Muslim countries, exploring in both cases, the role of governance in development.

Since 1978, China has practised a down-to-earth strategy for modernisation that has focused on the most pressing needs of its people. While the ruling party maintains political control, economic reins were loosened in the 1980s and the government allowed private entrepreneurship. The result is that China has emerged as the world's fastest growing economy. A key question under discussion today is whether China's success is an example that can be emulated elsewhere in the world. Many argue, however, whether a Chinese model exists at all, questioning the success of China's economic planners.

Professor Robert Springborg, Director of the London Middle East Institute, explained that the Chinese model of development had been chosen as a point of reference because of its current relevance. Some of the questions that need to be answered were the perceptions of the Chinese model in a variety of communities and how well the model was actually working.

Four attributes must be present for the model to be used in other regions. Assistant Professor William Hurst, University of Texas at Austin, reflected that the first is a large pool of reserve labour (thus keeping labour costs low); the second is the existence of good physical

infrastructure and development; the third, a relatively stable political environment; and the fourth, a large internal market.

However, a look at Latin American economies shows how the Chinese model is unsuitable in their political environment. Professor Barbara Stallings, Director of the Watson Institute at Brown University, explained that the firm commitment of most Latin Americans to liberal democracy means that the Chinese model and its political

structure reduce its appeal. In addition to the high growth rates of the Chinese model, Latin American economies observed the strong but shrinking state involvement in the economy, China's strong reliance on exports and its 'unfair' advantage of low wages.

Answering the question as to whether a Chinese model does exist, Professor Catherine Boone,

University of Texas at Austin, remarked that it was possible to define a model that is different from the development route set out by the World Bank. Previously unseen levels of investment are flowing from China into Africa suggesting that the economic and business approach of the Chinese does constitute a differentiable model. On the other hand, Boone suggested there is a level of scepticism concerning the natural resource exploitation currently occurring as a result of Chinese investment, which is no different from that experienced under the World Bank regime.

The Institute's Professor Modjtaba Sadria suggested that the Chinese 'model' had been constructed in the same way that 'miracles' and 'enigmas' were built around Japan and the four 'dragons' (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore). The proliferation of interest about such 'miracles' and 'enigmas' is rooted in the idea of successful, developed nations in the East as being the exception, rather than the norm. The Chinese model, he said, should not be seen as an ideology, but as an element of world cultures and globalised

Since 1978, China has practised a down-to-earth strategy for modernisation that has focused on the most pressing needs of its people. While the ruling party maintains political control, economic reins were loosened in the 1980s and the government allowed private entrepreneurship. The result is that China has emerged as the world's fastest growing economy.

development patterns.

In other sessions, the seminar examined development models from Muslim contexts and the role of governance in development. Professor Clement Henry of the University of Texas at Austin looked at Islamic responses to development, including Islamic finance or a return to a moral economy. Michigan State University Professor Mohammad Ayoob compared the development models of Iran and Turkey, focusing on their social and political contexts. SOAS Professor Mushtaq Khan spoke about how the pressure placed on developing nations to meet indicators of good governance may not actually contribute to economic development. Dr Ishrat Husain, Chairman of the National Commission for Government Reform in



China has emerged as the world's fastest growing economy

Pakistan, argued that good governance is essential not just for economic growth, but for the even distribution of economic growth across all spectrums of society.

At the end of the day what matters most is a good government capable of tackling poverty and delivering basic services and security. Only then can communities avoid conflict and various forms of extremisms and move on to establishing a rule of law and a culture of political tolerance, essential for progress.

This seminar was an event organised as part of the Golden Jubilee

celebrations of His Highness the Aga Khan, Chancellor of the University.

Schedule of Events

August to December 2008

August 26–28

12th National Health Sciences Research Symposium
*Injury in the Developing World,
From Prevention to Care*

September 10

Medical College 25th Anniversary Celebrations
Launching Ceremony

October 22–25

9th International APECSA Scientific Conference
Challenges of Pathology Practice in Africa

October 25

Postgraduate Medical Education
Graduation Ceremony, Pakistan

October 29

Talk by Hugh Kennedy
School of Oriental and African Studies

November 10–13

International Symposium on
Tropical Medicine & Hygiene
Global Perspectives, Local Solutions

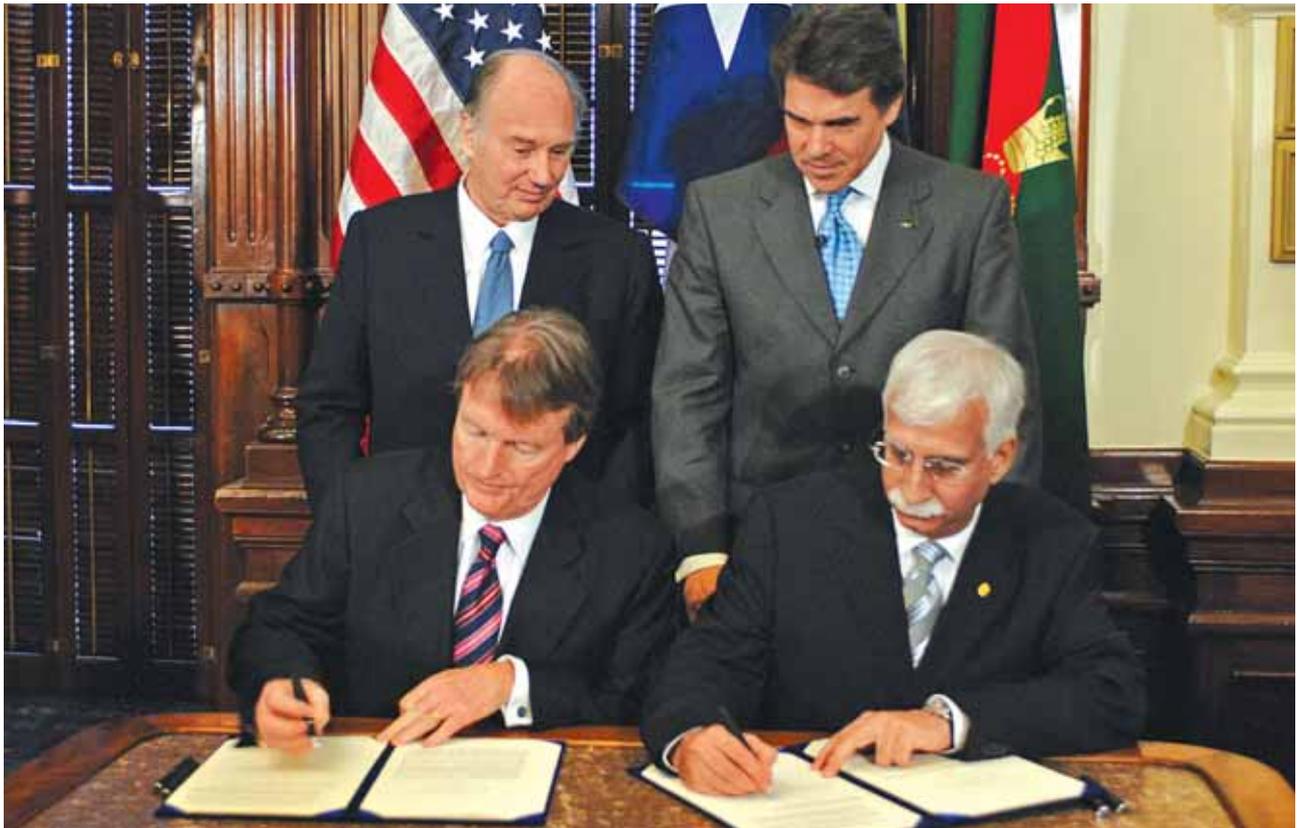
November 12–14

11th International Scientific Conference
*Quality Health Care and Health Professional
Education in Developing Countries*

December 15–21

Grand Alumni Reunion

New Partnerships



Gary Olire

President Powers of the University of Texas at Austin and President Rasul of Aga Khan University signing the Memorandum of Understanding at the Texas State Capitol, as His Highness the Aga Khan and Governor Rick Perry of Texas look on

The University of Texas at Austin and Aga Khan University have entered into an innovative partnership to pool their distinct knowledge resources. At an April 2008 ceremony attended by the Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan and the Texas Governor Rick Perry, AKU President Firoz Rasul and UT President William Powers Jr., signed a five-year memorandum of understanding. The plan is to expand the two Universities' existing programmes to narrow the gap in understanding between the West and Islam and to bridge the divide between developed and developing countries.

The agreement will expand the University of Texas at Austin, College of Liberal Arts' UTeach-Liberal Arts' Muslim Histories and Cultures Program for Texas high school teachers. The programme was developed by a curriculum working group led by faculty from the UT College of Liberal Arts and resource persons from Aga Khan Development Network. Since 2004, more than 80 secondary teachers from five school districts have been

learning about Muslim history and cultures and incorporating their new knowledge into teaching in the classroom. The programme will train an additional 180 teachers from an expanded number of districts in the State over the next three years. This partnership is unique as it is looking to impact not only the teacher preparation programme at the University of Texas at Austin, but also curriculum development in the Texas school system. The University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations will lead the project with the College of Liberal Arts.

Both Presidents Powers and Rasul described the agreement signed as an opportunity to understand and appreciate diversity through dialogue. AKU's rich data and understanding of local conditions combined with the University of Texas' knowledge and expertise provide the two universities with an opportunity to share learning and embark upon new research initiatives in order to make a positive contribution to the lives of people in the developing world.