

# Global Giving

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# MATTERS

## In This Issue

This issue features an example of philanthropy in particularly difficult circumstances – the work of the Aga Khan Development Network in Afghanistan. The AKDN's experience points out key issues relevant to donors of all types and interests, such as identifying partners, understanding local conditions and leveraging additional resources.

Global Giving Matters presents best practices and innovations in philanthropy and social investment around the world.

It is an initiative of The Synergos Institute's Global Philanthropists Circle and the World Economic Forum under the direction of Adele Simmons, Senior Advisor to the Forum, and James M. Brasher III, Director, Global Philanthropists Circle. Myra Alperson is Consulting Editor.

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## 2 Supporting Innovation in Afghanistan – the Experience of the Aga Khan Development Network

## 6 Global Giving Round-Up

- New Russian philanthropies offer new models of giving
- Indian engineers in US spread wealth at home
- Children in Poland raise funds for Afghanistan's only arts school
- New funds support Afghan women and Caribbean families
- Grantmakers increase Washington presence to influence national policy
- Family foundation helps empower teachers and students around the world
- Ghanaian thankful for scholarship in US offers similar opportunities in Ghana
- Indiana program teaches youth about philanthropy
- Geekcorps recruits high-tech volunteers to bridge the global digital divide
- Help Nepal Network enlists Nepalis overseas to bring help home
- Philanthropy Ink: Foundation leaders should promote creativity and innovation

## 9 Resources & Links

- Global social change philanthropy is focus of November conference
- Website recommends international giving opportunities
- Funders encouraged to support nonprofit research
- Membership organization promotes strategic communication of philanthropy

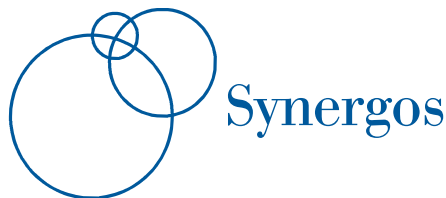
## 10 Global Philanthropists Circle News

- GPC Annual Meeting/Seminar October 29 in New York City

## 10 Your Ideas Wanted

[www.globalgivingmatters.org](http://www.globalgivingmatters.org)

[comments@globalgivingmatters.org](mailto:comments@globalgivingmatters.org)



## FEATURE: SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN AFGHANISTAN – THE EXPERIENCE OF THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan opened up myriad opportunities to redevelop the social and physical infrastructure of this devastated country. A major player in its rehabilitation is the **Aga Khan Development Network** (AKDN – [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)), an entity so large, multifaceted and influential that in some countries it has its own embassy and diplomatic status. Its mission is straightforward: “To develop and promote creative solutions to problems that impede social development, primarily in Asia and East Africa.” Headquartered in Gouviex, France, and comprising a set of specialized developmental agencies, the AKDN has branches and independent affiliates in 12 countries.

AKDN is headed by **Prince Karim Aga Khan**, one of the world's most prominent philanthropists. In 1956, when he was just 20, he became the leader of the 15 million Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims who live in 25 countries in East Africa and Central and South Asia. While a principal goal of his vast development initiatives is to serve the communities where Ismailis live, the network's programs in education, medical services, economic development and culture reach out to people of all backgrounds and faiths. Prince Karim Aga Khan is also a leader in the movement to preserve great monuments around the world.

**Najmi Kanji** heads the AKDN's work in Afghanistan. A public health specialist who now calls himself a "generalist," Mr. Kanji worked in Tanzania for AKDN from 1993 to 1996 and then in Tajikistan, where a new program was just starting up. At the beginning of 2002, he was assigned to head the network's program in Afghanistan, where he currently spends most of his time, although he is based in AKDN's London office.

*Global Giving Matters* interviewed Mr. Kanji about AKDN's work in Afghanistan.

**Global Giving Matters:** *When did AKDN launch the Afghanistan initiative?*

**Najmi Kanji:** AKDN has actually been working in Afghanistan since 1995, mostly providing food aid and other non-food support through an affiliate called **Focus Humanitarian Assistance**. We now have the opportunity to switch from the humanitarian/rehabilitation mode to long-term development. In January of this year, His Highness the Aga Khan pledged \$75 million as an initial investment for our new initiative. Then in March he visited Kabul at the invitation of **President Karzai**, to sign an agreement of cooperation that provides the AKDN with diplomatic status in Afghanistan, and includes a framework for the AKDN's activities in the country. The Aga Khan also made an additional grant of \$2 million for the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) to hold a national meeting for the election of Afghanistan's new leaders. We're there for the long term, so this was just the beginning.

**GGM:** *Why and how did the Aga Khan get the motivation to establish the network? What was learned from that experience that impacts your work in Afghanistan?*

**NK:** I think that the establishment of the Network was always premised in the Aga Khan's belief that the poor of this world need a spark that can help them to improve

their lives. More philosophically, compassion and caring for the less fortunate in society is one of Islam's basic tenets

**GGM:** *How many staff do you work with?*

**NK:** We have close to 300 staff, most of them local. Our strength lies in building local capacity. We also have around 15 expatriates. The program is run out of Kabul, with five regional offices and operations covering 10 provinces in northeast Afghanistan. Our work in rural areas revolves around rural development, with emphases on agriculture, engineering, micro-credit, hydro-electric power, health and education.

Of these staff, our regional program managers are generalists, but most staff are engineering or agriculture experts, or organizers who work in villages to set up social organizations.

**GGM:** *Are there particular pitfalls that you've encountered in your role as a funder, and how have you dealt with them?*

**NK:** The AKDN very rarely funds outside agencies partly because of the concern over possible shortcomings, scandals etc, thus, we are extremely careful in the process of selection of potential grantees. We tend to provide a lot of funding for our own programs, and often grants or once off support to government institutions.

**GGM:** *How do you work with the communities?*

**NK:** First, you have to bring people in rural areas together so you can get economies of scale by creating village organizations, women's committees, and so on. But people won't come together unless they have a vested interest. One of our strategies is to offer credit for feed and fertilizer, but instead of paying the loan back to us, the money goes to the village organization, which lends seed and fertilizer to more farmers. This village asset can then be used for other purposes such as teachers' salaries etc. This approach gives people a sense of ownership.

**GGM:** *How do you ensure accountability when you give credit this way?*

**NK:** We monitor payments and expenses very closely. We check every penny that's spent and retain the right to stop payments when they're not used correctly. We want people to feel that the money is theirs, but it mustn't be abused. These approaches are all part of a process to build community skills and to develop democracy and, ultimately, prosperity. We see community development as a process rather a project.

**GGM:** *What are the pitfalls you've encountered in your organizing attempts?*

**NK:** This is a very conservative society. What we've found in Afghanistan – and Pakistan, too – is that traditions do not allow men and women to always participate equally. One has to accept this and look for creative ways to facilitate women's participation – for example we have women's groups within a village that are involved in a range of economic activities quite distinct from men's activities. And the women often do better than men!

**GGM:** *Can you elaborate on the projects targeting women?*

We believe that we need to create an economic demand for the work women do. Legislation and advocacy are important, but they are meaningless without an economic demand. We're trying to ensure that women have a say in policies relating to them, and also that they can access credit, so we're setting up a micro-credit program and hiring women credit officers. Certain trades, including bee-keeping (to make honey) and poultry production, are quick entry points for women. Right now, after three years of drought, the situation has been so difficult that we're focusing on basic food production. Fortunately, things are turning around this year where we're working.

On the national level we're supporting training institutions for teachers and nurses, to be able to train large numbers of teachers and nurses – the majority will be women – to be able to not only meet the country's health and education needs, but also to provide employment for large numbers of women.

**GGM:** *We often read about the “lost generation” of women who missed out on education for five years. How is AKDN addressing this problem?*

**NK:** Because of the Taliban's onslaught on women's rights, older Afghan women are more educated than younger women. So we're creating a space where younger women can “catch up” for lost time. Our teacher-training program is going to be a “fast track” six-month course so that girls who had six or seven years of training can begin to teach. There aren't lots of women with ten to 12 years of education!

**GGM:** *We understand that AKDN has a policy of working in partnerships, with the goal of leveraging its investment dollars seven to eight times. Who are the principal partners in Afghanistan?*

**NK:** Sometimes the leveraging is just one to one – it depends on the project and the partner. In forming partnerships, our main points of reference are the government and the communities within which we work. We have large programs already under way with **USAID**, the **US State Department**, the **European Commission**, the **British**, **Canadian**, and **German Governments**. The fact that we cover all our overhead costs and often put in our own money into these collaborative programs, and our long-term experience makes us attractive partners.

**GGM:** *Why is AKDN working in just ten provinces rather than nationwide?*

**NK:** First, these ten provinces have Ismailies spread out in them. The AKDN has a responsibility to meet the needs of the Ismailies! However, this is never done to the exclusion of others. Indeed, Ismailies are a minority, living amongst many ethnic and religious groups, and it would be folly to work exclusively with them. Secondly, these ten provinces provide a heterogeneous population made up of Tajiks, Hazaras, Pashtuns and Uzbeks. We believe that our programs, as they have done in Pakistan and Tajikistan, can help make bridges between communities through creating common interest around improving livelihoods. Therefore, we have consciously selected these ten provinces for the mix of communities that live there. Everywhere else the communities are quite homogeneous and we believe in and want to promote pluralism.

**GGM:** *A private university for Central Asian students is under way. Can you discuss the Aga Khan's role in this?*

**NK:** In 2000 His Highness the Aga Khan signed an international treaty with the presidents of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to create the **University of Central Asia**, the first private university in the high mountain areas of this region. There's already a campus in Khorog in southern Tajikistan. The first faculty will focus on continuing education for adults – training in English, computers, business skills, and so on. We hope to introduce the first modules in 2003. Most courses will be in English and Russian, and when it's ready, Afghanistan will be incorporated into it. You know, Afghanistan is considered the “great gate” to Central Asia. In a project like this, we work closely with the United States, the European Economic Community, Canada and other funders.

**GGM:** *How are the Afghanistan programs different from others undertaken by AKDN?*

**NK:** Each program draws on the circumstances in the country where we work. In Tajikistan, we faced a civil war, near-starvation in some areas and no money in the budget. But you had 99% literacy (as an ex-Soviet state), a network of schools and clinics, and many university graduates. In Afghanistan – just across the river – you have feudalism, no electricity, no roads, no clinics – and social structures that throw you 200 years into the past. Everything, of course, is aggravated by 20 years of war, and the logistics are very difficult because of the topology.

**GGM:** *In addition to the formidable challenges you've just described, what other major challenges do you face in Afghanistan?*

**NK:** So many people are armed. Many areas are run by commanders who are aligned to different groups. And many Afghans do not have many choices at the present time. A lot of people say we shouldn't work with the military commanders, but you don't have a choice if you want to work with communities in Afghanistan. So we try to do this in ways that don't jeopardize our integrity. If a leader – a commander – can bring development assets to his people, he can create a new image as someone who's looking after them. It's a fact of life and we can't dismiss it, so we work with the commanders who are forward looking. In the new Afghanistan, building trust – on all sides – is critical.

# GLOBAL GIVING ROUNDUP

*Overviews of best practices around the world and links to learn more about them*

*Links to Web sites with more details are available at the online edition of Global Giving Matters at [www.globalgivingmatters.org](http://www.globalgivingmatters.org)*

## **New Russian philanthropies offer new models of giving**

Two of Russia's wealthiest men – one based in Russia, the other in exile – have established philanthropies that aim to have global impact. **Mikhail Khodorkovsky**, head of Yukos, Russia's second largest oil company, and sometimes described as Russia's richest man, has created the **Open Russia Foundation** ([www.openrussiafoundation.org](http://www.openrussiafoundation.org)) with a donation of €16.3 million (US\$14.4 million). With secretariats in Russia and London, where the Foundation was launched, its projects include the Young Leaders Program; the Federation of Internet Education and the New Civilization project. A second Russian philanthropist, this one living in New York under a self-imposed political exile, is media entrepreneur **Boris Berezovsky**. He has created the **International Foundation for Civil Liberties** ([www.kolokol.org](http://www.kolokol.org)) to support journalists. It currently has offices in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia whose activities focus on preserving and developing Russian Culture. (*Philanthropy in Europe*, April 2002)

## **Indian engineers in US spread wealth at home**

A group of Indian-born engineers based in Silicon Valley have formed **VIDE (Volunteer for India Development and Empowerment)**, with the goal of supporting NGOs in India that have strong track records in promoting self-help initiatives. Since its founding in 2002, VIDE has raised over \$900,000. They support not just disaster-relief initiatives but programs that have ongoing economic benefit, such as rebuilding artisans' workshops as a way to promote local craftsmanship; building and equipping a vocational school to provide skills to unemployed adults; and buying and supplying a medical van that provides prosthetics to adults in rural areas. Each VIDE volunteer oversees a project and then visits it on trips home to India. (*The Mercury News*, June 12, 2002)

## **Children in Poland raise funds for Afghanistan's only arts school**

Children in Poland, working under the auspices of the Warsaw-based charity **Polska Akcja Humanitarna (Polish Humanitarian Organisation – [pah.weblab.pl](http://pah.weblab.pl))**, recently raised funds to help rebuild the only music and arts school in Afghanistan. Built in 1973 near Kabul University, the school had been used as a military facility by the former ruling Taliban and had been mostly destroyed. Afghan arts instructors, many in exile, have been returning to re-staff the school, which teaches 200 children aged 12 to 18. Working with Polish specialists, an Afghan construction firm is rebuilding the school, which is expected to reopen in March. Polska Akcja Humanitarna works within Poland with refugees, helping to integrate them into society, and also has projects in Kosovo, Chechnya, Lithuania and Serbia. (*Associated Press*, August 1, 2002)

## **New funds support Afghan women and Caribbean families**

**Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA – [www.rockpa.org](http://www.rockpa.org))** recently announced the creation of two special collaborative funds to support Afghan women's initiatives and projects in the Caribbean. What distinguishes these funds from past projects by RPA –

which works closely with individual donors on increasing their effectiveness – is that they welcome donors beyond RPA's existing clients. In Afghanistan, the funds will focus on health, education and service organizations run by Afghan women leaders. In a second grantmaking phase, the fund will assist several international organizations that strengthen these leaders' capacity. The Caribbean fund was created to address severe needs in this generally under-funded region, with emphasis on children and youth at risk; improved livelihoods; environmental sustainability; and local empowerment.

### Grantmakers increase Washington presence to influence national policy

Several US-based grantmakers are adding outreach to congress lobbying to their portfolios as a way to cause change. **The Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation**, based in Silicon Valley, announced plans to create a political advocacy group in Washington to counter conservative voices in Washington. In addition, the **Open Society Institute**, founded by George Soros, has opened an Open Society Policy Center in Washington to advocate on international issues (similar to the approach taken by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, which opened a Washington office earlier this year). According to *The Wall Street Journal*, some foundation leaders are criticizing this development as moving beyond what they consider appropriate roles for foundations (identifying critical issues, funding research and projects to address them, and encouraging public discussion) to promoting their own ideas. (*The Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2002)

### Family foundation helps empower teachers and students around the world

A nonprofit organization called **iEARN (International Education and Resource Network** – [www.iearn.org](http://www.iearn.org)), which operates in 4,000 schools in nearly 100 countries, encourages teachers and young people to work together online – and often across borders – at very low cost using the Internet and other new technologies. Founded in 1988 with funding from the New York City-based **Copen Family Fund**, iEARN now has more than 100 projects whose curricula teachers can draw on for their classes. A common feature of these projects is that they help develop research and critical thinking skills; experience with new technologies; an awareness of cultural diversity; and community involvement. Founder **Peter Copen**, who previously owned a textile business, has been involved with educational initiatives since 1975, and full-time with iEARN since its creation. He's currently a member of iEARN's US board of directors and of the international assembly of iEARN Global.

### Ghanaian thankful for scholarship in US offers similar opportunities in Ghana

In 1985, **Patrick Awuah** left Ghana to attend Swarthmore College on a full scholarship and then spent eight years as an engineer and program manager at Microsoft, before he earned an MBA at the University of California at Berkeley's **Haas School of Business**. His reason for getting the business degree wasn't just to enhance his own skills but to help other Ghanaians improve their lives. He created the **Ashesi University Foundation** (based in Seattle) and **Ashesi University College** ([www.ashesi.org](http://www.ashesi.org)), based in Accra, where, as its president, he welcomed the first 31 students to campus this past March, as they undertook studies in business and computer science. He envisions

Ashesi as a world-class institution to train “ethical and entrepreneurial” business leaders. Colleagues from the Haas School worked with him to do a feasibility study prior to creating Ashesi, and continue to collaborate in aspects of the university and foundation.

### Indiana program teaches youth about philanthropy

A new, six-week summer **Institute on Philanthropy and Voluntary Service** at Indiana University is introducing college students – and giving them credits in the process – to philanthropy. The program enables participants – there were 23 this summer, including some from outside the US – to work with service-oriented organizations while also discussing the ethics and history of philanthropy. The program appears to be in line with an increased bent towards altruism among young people aged eight to 17, according to a 2000 *Roper Youth Report*, which indicates that the target group is less focused on materialism and more on doing good. Of 1,200 children surveyed, 37% said they aimed to help other people – up from 31% in 1995. (*The Indianapolis Star*, July 11, 2002)

### Geekcorps recruits high-tech volunteers to bridge the global digital divide

In a novel approach to voluntarism and philanthropy, a nonprofit called **Geekcorps** ([www.geekcorps.org](http://www.geekcorps.org)) matches young high-tech experts with small businesses in emerging democracies in Africa and Asia to help them build technological capacity, and, in particular, to master the Internet. Geekcorps volunteers and its partner businesses first assess their technical needs, and then Geekcorps identify volunteers who have the necessary expertise. Geekcorps trains its volunteers to teach their skills to people from different backgrounds. Founder **Ethan Zuckerman** was a vice-president at Tripod, one of the largest community websites, prior to creating Geekcorps, which is based in North Adams, Massachusetts. Geekcorps, which has recently launched a program in Mongolia, is a division of the **International Executive Service Corps**.

### Help Nepal Network enlists Nepalis overseas to bring help home

Since its founding in 1999 by London-based journalist **Rabindra Mishra**, the **Help Nepal Network (HeNN)** – [www.helpnepal.net](http://www.helpnepal.net), has enlisted Nepalese living around the world (but mostly in 10 countries thus far) to support projects in Nepal, which has been in the throes of a severe economic and political crisis. In early June, HeNN members organized a “Help Nepal Day” fund-raising day that took place in the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy and Nepal; some activities have also taken place in New Zealand, Belgium, Finland and the United States. To date, HeNN has helped build schools and libraries and has sponsored health camps. (*The Kathmandu Post*, June 4, 2002)

### Philanthropy Ink: Foundation leaders should promote creativity and innovation

In an opinion piece in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, **Joel Orosz**, former Kellogg Foundation program director, urges chief executives at the nation’s largest foundations

to make a concerted effort to promote creativity and innovation within their ranks. Evoking the “skunk works” of the “Li'l Abner” cartoons, Orosz suggests that foundations create a loose circle of the “most audaciously creative minds” at the organization, giving them the opportunity to strategize new ideas and directions. He noted that Lockheed Corporation used this model at an earlier time and came up with major innovations in the manufacture of jet aircraft. (*The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 27, 2002)

## RESOURCES & LINKS

*Activities, websites and other cutting-edge information for global givers*

*Links to websites with more details are available at the online edition of Global Giving Matters at [www.globalgivingmatters.org](http://www.globalgivingmatters.org)*

### Global social change philanthropy is focus of November conference

**Grantmakers Without Borders** ([www.internationaldonors.org](http://www.internationaldonors.org)), a collaborative project of the **International Donors' Dialogue** and the **International Working Group of the National Network of Grantmakers** is sponsoring a conference on global social change philanthropy from November 17-19 to be held at Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center in Washington, DC. According to its sponsors, “Grantmakers must think strategically about how [their] limited resources can best be leveraged for the greatest impact. Looking beyond charity, seeking something more than poverty alleviation, social change philanthropy seeks the deepest, most long-term solutions. This is money well spent, it is just, it is effective, and it is strategic.”

### Website recommends international giving opportunities

An interesting feature of the website of **Grantmakers Without Borders** (see above) is a listing of projects that could be of interest to international philanthropists. It recommends NGOs doing development work worldwide, describes their work and then lists the organizations through which the donor may help them. To see this resource, visit [www.internationaldonors.org/projects/alpha.html](http://www.internationaldonors.org/projects/alpha.html).

### Funders encouraged to support nonprofit research

Funders should support nonprofit research as a way of improving the quality of nonprofits themselves, according to the **Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund** ([www.nonprofitresearch.org](http://www.nonprofitresearch.org)). The May/June 2002 issue of the Fund's newsletter, *Snapshots*, summarizes a meeting that examined the weaknesses of this scholarly field. By funding high-quality researchers, including doctoral students and junior and senior faculty; by supporting opportunities for nonprofit researchers and practitioners to col-

laborate on setting agendas or developing research relevant to nonprofit practice; and by supporting the development of large data sets that allow for generalizations beyond one particular case study, funders can make a significant difference in perceptions and reporting on the nonprofit world.

### Membership organization promotes strategic communication of philanthropy

"Strengthening the Voice of Philanthropy" is the motto of the **Communications Network** ([www.comnetwork.org](http://www.comnetwork.org)), a membership organization based in Washington, DC that promotes strategic communications of issues related to philanthropy. Current membership includes mainly community, corporate and private foundations.

## GLOBAL PHILANTHROPISTS CIRCLE NEWS

*For the latest information  
about the Global  
Philanthropists Circle, visit  
[www.gpcparlor.org](http://www.gpcparlor.org)*

### GPC Annual Meeting/Seminar October 29 in New York City

A number of GPC members from around the world will attend the forthcoming meeting, to be held October 29 in New York. For example, **Tokyo Sexwale**, a member from South Africa, will share his own history as a revolutionary, his 13 years in prison with Nelson Mandela and his role as Premier of the largest province in South Africa during the Mandela government. Now, as a key business leader, Tokyo is working to reduce the country's inequities through his own philanthropic activities.

## YOUR IDEAS WANTED

**Global Giving Matters** aims to present information on best practices and innovations in philanthropy and social investment around the world. We encourage you to send us:

- Ideas about issues or people you would like to learn more about
- Examples of your own philanthropy
- Comments about this issue.

Write to us at [comments@globalgivingmatters.org](mailto:comments@globalgivingmatters.org).

Global Giving Matters does not present solicitations of support for particular initiatives or organizations.