

# EDUCATION



Photo: AKDN/ Gary Otte

A strong commitment to learning has been at the very root of Ismaili and Islamic culture, going back to the first Imam of the Shia Muslims, the fourth Caliph, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, and his emphasis on knowledge. The tradition was renewed over many centuries in many places by the Abbasids, the Fatimids, the Safavids, the Mughals, the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. During his Imamate, my late Grandfather started some 300 schools in this region. The Academies Programme is thus planted in rich historic soil.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Foundation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy**  
**Kampala, Uganda, August 22, 2007**

Speech at [AKDN](#)

This is a core principle of my own faith – Islam – that learning is ennobling, regardless of the geographic or cultural origin of the knowledge we acquire.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam, American University of Beirut, Lebanon, June 25, 2005**  
Speech at [AKDN](#)

A thousand years ago, my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. In the Islamic tradition, they viewed the discovery of knowledge as a way to understand, so as to serve better God's creation, to apply knowledge and reason to build society and shape human aspirations.

The Academies are, therefore, a continuing articulation of this vision, a statement of great hope in the power of good education, and an investment in the development of the best minds who will enable future generations to take charge of their own destinies.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Foundation Ceremony of**  
**Aga Khan Academy**  
**Maputo, Mozambique**  
**June 25, 2004**

Speech at [AKDN](#)



Photo: AKDN

From the seventh century to the thirteenth century, the Muslim civilisations dominated world culture, accepting, adopting, using and preserving all preceding study of mathematics, philosophy, medicine and astronomy, among other areas of learning. The Islamic field of thought and knowledge included and added to much of the information on which all civilisations are founded.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Baccalaureate address at**  
**Brown University**  
**May 26, 1996**

Speech at [AKDN](#)

The most important thing we can learn - or teach - at any School - in a world of perpetual change - is the ability to go on learning.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Foundation Ceremony for the AKU**  
**Graduate School of Media and**  
**Communications (Nairobi, Kenya)**  
**27 July 2011**

Speech at [AKDN](#)

"The Aga Khan University is to be an Islamic Institution. It will draw upon the great historical tradition of Muslim learning, the heritage of such scholars and scientists as al-Razi, al-Biruni, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd."

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Inauguration of the Aga Khan University**  
**Karachi, Pakistan**  
**November 11, 1985**

.....you can have nothing in your pocket, and only the clothes and the shoes you wear, but if you have a well educated mind, you will be able to seize the opportunities life offers you, and start all over again.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam, "The Peterson Lecture," Atlanta, Georgia, USA, April 18, 2008**  
Speech at [AKDN](#)