"This afternoon we mark an important new stage in the development of the Aga Khan University. Professor Bacchus has detailed the structure and functioning of the Institute for Educational Development, but I should like to describe to you my thoughts about why an Institute like this is so important to Pakistan and the developing world, and why it is a logical extension of the university's programme.

"In its ten years the university has succeeded in establishing respected schools of nursing and medicine. The respect that they have engendered comes foremost from the quality of the education that they offer. Consistent stress has been maintained on attracting talented students and a distinguished faculty, providing them with the resources needed to do their work well, and holding them to a high standard....

"The quality of primary and secondary education here in Pakistan and elsewhere is a profound problem, one that cruelly fetters the development of this country and many others. And the problem of educational quality is one that has engaged the minds of intelligent people around the world, people concerned not just with classroom teaching but also with such fields as human development, organisational management and social science research. IED therefore offers the opportunity to bring international competence to bear on the solution of a complex local, but pervasive problem.

"The Institute for Educational Development targets a very
important, low status profession: teaching. AKU has long addressed, in nursing, another such profession. The strategy that IED has developed for improving teaching bears many similarities to that which the School of Nursing has used. The very creation of IED highlights the importance of teaching, and the programmes of IED are crafted to amplify that message. The technical work of the Institute is designed to raise the competence of teachers, both in their substantive areas of speciality and in their teaching skills, with the expectation that a truly excellent teacher can inspire others by example. Greater competence may not ensure higher status, but it will make it easier to achieve. Neither publicity nor good training is likely to make much difference, however, unless an environment is created in which good teachers can be more effective. IED is planning to devote much of its work to creating such an environment. By working with school heads, not just individual teachers, IED will try to build a new teaching environment. The leadership of school heads is essential to real reform.

"Essential to the success of this novel enterprise is the use of research. In seeking the way through unmapped territory, one must test tentative routes and continually redirect the exploration along the most promising paths. Research on educational matters is in its infancy in Pakistan. IED is organised to bring research competence to bear on issues ranging from the very practical problems of classroom teaching and school management to relevant questions of educational policy. Through research, the lessons learned in the relatively small group of schools with which one Professional Development Centre can work can be abstracted and generalised for application by others elsewhere. IED and the PDC that we inaugurate today, or subsequent PDC's, can therefore hope to have an impact far beyond their immediate reach.

"The international make-up of the cadre of Master Teachers not only extends the potential future reach of IED's programmes, but it brings complementary perspectives from different countries to the identification of teaching problems and the selection of potential solutions. Last on this list of strategies, but critical to the likelihood of impact of IED on a larger scale, is the involvement of governmental schools and policy makers within the Ministry of
Education. Private schools can be exemplars of excellence, but models that show success in the private sector will have far greater impact if they can be adapted for widespread use in public schools.

"Those of you who have helped IED come this far are pioneers in a new land. Much remains to be done to secure the benefits that this early exploration suggests can be achieved."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1994 Professional Development Centre, Institute for Educational Development, Opening Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/4971/

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the visionary, Professional Development Centres of the Aga Khan Academies

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 1/5: Rational, vision and hopes

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 2/5: The School of Nursing
See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 4/5: Research


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See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 5/5: The Future


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