

Rahim Somani, MA EPEID (UK), CPA, CA, FCA, FCMA

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SUMMARY

Over 20 years of senior leadership experience in primary, secondary, and higher education across South and Central Asia, and North America. Have lived, traveled and worked in diverse and multi-cultural environments; consistently demonstrated leadership and excellence in achieving organizational objectives as well as building local capacity and human resources; proven record of establishing institutions/start-ups, change management and organizational development.

Expertise include educational planning; strategic and financial planning; budgeting and finance; project financing; financial analysis and reporting; human resource management and organization development; management information and IT systems; procurement and general administration; capital projects and facilities management; corporate affairs; internal audit; and program management.

CPA, CA from British Columbia and Ontario, Canada; an MA in Educational Planning, Economics and International Development from the Institute of Education, University College London (formerly University of London); an alumnus of the Institute for Educational Management (IEM Class of 2014), Harvard Institutes for Higher Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Planning

- Led integrated planning and budget for the University of Northern British Columbia (annual turnover >\$100 million).
- Led the development of an Integrated Implementation Plan for the University of Central Asia (UCA) including phasing approach; academic, financial and human resource projections; and financing model for operations and capital costs (\$1.4 billion over 25 years).
- Developed three to five-year rolling plans and budgets for the University of Central Asia: annually since 2008 (average annual turnover for operations at Phase I cruising level \$25 million).
- Prepared three-year rolling plans and budgets for the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES), Pakistan through increased participation from the grassroots level (average annual turnover ~\$10 million): overall cost recovery increased from 55% to 70% over a five-year period.
- Developed a 15-year long-term strategic plan for AKES, Pakistan to increase access to quality education from 30% to 60% for catchment population. This included organizational vision, core ideology, gap analysis, goal setting, strategies and operational plan: access study 2007-2008 and portfolio review were the basis for the proposed long-term strategy.
- Led the education access study in 2007-2008 (survey of 100,000 households across Pakistan), which included envisioning long-term desired aspirations, analysis of key challenges and strangle points, historical analysis, analysis of market trends, overall social development (education) scene in the region, critical review of alternate strategies and recommendations for long-term strategy.
- Developed and implemented the long-term educational development plan for Afghan refugees (over 20,000 children and adults) providing structured solutions to turn their tragedy into opportunity.

Program Planning and Implementation

- Re-aligned the academic structure of seven Aga Khan Schools in Karachi and Southern Pakistan (over 10,000 students) including development and implementation of the plan for single-shift operations and expansion of the network of Higher Secondary Schools.
- Led a comprehensive portfolio review of all 174 Aga Khan Schools in Northern Pakistan (over 27,500 students) along with recommendations for future development and rationalization.
- Successful final evaluation of European Commission (EC) funded Northern Pakistan Education Program (NPEP) phase I (1997-2003) €14.4 million; secured additional award of €20 million educational development grant from the EC for the period 2003-2008 for educational initiatives in the Northern Areas and Chitral (NPEP phase II); formulated and implemented the exit strategy for EC funded NPEP phase II (2003-2008) including human resource and staffing strategy and alternative options to ensure continuation of educational programs within limited resources.
- Formulated the operational plan for the introduction of pre-primary classes in Chitral and English as medium of instruction at 51 Aga Khan Schools in Chitral (over 6,000 students).
- Conceptualized and implemented a school preparation and placement program for facilitating child refugees to access and excel in formal schooling by bringing the enormously varying academic abilities of similar age groups to uniformity (100% success in integration and academic outcomes).

Financial Management

- Spearheaded the budgeting, cash flow planning, financial monitoring and reporting for UCA's capital projects (Phase I of three campuses: \$285 million) and ongoing operations (Phase I cruising level: \$25 million/annually).
- Led the successful negotiation for the \$30m financing facility from the United States' Overseers Private Investment Corporation for the University of Central Asia's Khorog (Tajikistan) campus.
- Led the implementation of the financial information system (iSCALA); internal control and processes; Financial Policies and Procedures Manual; regular financial reporting and dashboards, IFRS compliant financial statements and annual external audits with clean audit reports.
- Established and implemented a comprehensive financial assistance program for the University of Central Asia comprising merit scholarships, need-based grants and student loans. This included policies and procedures; process flow, forms and guidelines; assessment criteria matrix; organization structure; and building the capacity of local human resources (Phase I cruising level: \$3 million/annually).
- Established grant management mechanism including budgeting, accounting and reporting systems: more than 100 grants over \$30 million secured up to 2019 including from Global Affairs Canada, International Development Research Centre, United States Agency for International Development, Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Norway, the World Bank, and Swiss Agency for Development.

Capital Projects

- Implementation of works packages-based in-house construction management strategy for completing the Phase I of University campuses in Naryn, Kyrgyz Republic (\$85m) and Khorog, Tajikistan (\$94m) within time and budget despite significant geographic challenges while ensuring optimal socio-economic benefit to the local communities (more than \$475m over 25 years).
- Feasibility study for six Aga Khan Higher Secondary Schools and two Aga Khan High Schools across Pakistan; feasibility study and expansion plan for the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Karachi, enabling 100% increase in capacity within the same infrastructure.

Administrative Services

- Spearheaded the integration of administrative services across all units of the University, streamlining of procurement processes and formalization of UCA Procurement Policy and procurement arrangements through effective negotiations and finalization of framework contracts.
- Reviewed and implemented adequate insurance provision for University properties and assets as well as life, personal accident and medical insurance for faculty and staff.

Human Resource Management and Organizational Development

- Formulated and implemented a multi-pronged strategy for building capacity of local human resources and developing institutional systems and processes at the University of Central Asia.
- Recommended proposed transition and long-term organizational structure for effective and efficient management of AKES, Pakistan while maintaining focus on school improvement.
- Developed and implemented field-based planning framework for program development, implementation, monitoring and tracking of key performance indicators.
- Established and implemented an effective and attractive compensation and benefit structure for faculty of the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School, Karachi to attract and retain quality staff, including accelerated salary increment plan, leave encashment, attendance bonus, performance incentives, medical benefits, car loans, etc.
- Developed capacity of Afghan refugees for program implementation and future leadership roles and responsibilities.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Vice President, Finance and Administration | University of Northern BC 2020 – Present

- Provide leadership and oversight over finance, administrative and business services. Lead strategic, financial and operational planning, and relied on for expertise, leadership, innovation, collaboration, relationship building, organizational development and change management skills.

Founding Chief Financial Officer | University of Central Asia 2008 – 2020

- As a member of the senior executive team, played a key role in planning and developing a multi-campus university and provided leadership and oversight to University Operations.

Acting Chief Executive Officer | Aga Khan Education Service (AKES), Pakistan 2002 – 2005

- Reporting to the Chairperson of the Board, led the overall planning and provided leadership and oversight to entire operations across Pakistan.

Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary | AKES, Pakistan 2004 – 2008

General Manager and Company Secretary | AKES, Pakistan 2001 – 2004

Assistant General Manager and Company Secretary | AKES, Pakistan 2000 – 2001

Program Manager | AKES, Pakistan 1998 – 2000

- Reporting to the sub-Committee of the Board provided management oversight to the Humanitarian Assistance Program (Education Component) and leadership in policy formulation, planning, organization, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Senior Assistant Manager, Internal Audit | Aga Khan University Hospital 1997 – 1998

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC WRITING

Research (unpublished)

- The status of the teaching profession in Pakistan: Issues, challenges and recommendations – A case study of the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (2006).

Academic papers (unpublished)

- Gender and Education for All: Gender equality and education in Pakistan (2004).
- Teaching as a profession: Challenges and positioning (2005).
- Planning process at Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan: A review (2005).
- An analysis of equity in Education: World Bank data sheets (2005).

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Non-Executive Director | First MicroCredit Company, Kyrgyz Republic 2011 – 2019

- Chairperson, Human Capital Committee
- Permanent Observer, Audit Committee

Aga Khan Music Initiative | Aga Khan Trust for Culture 2014 – 2017

- Member Oversight Group

Member Finance | National ITREB for Pakistan 2002 – 2005

Member Finance | Ismaili Council for Garden, Karachi, Pakistan 1996 – 2002

**Chairperson | Community-Based Education Society/School and
Ex-Officio | Aga Khan Education Board for Garden, Karachi, Pakistan** 1996 – 1998

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

**Institute for Educational Management (IEM) | Harvard Institutes for Higher Education,
Harvard Graduate School of Education** 2014

**Chartered Professional Accountant, Chartered Accountant (CPA, CA) |
Chartered Professional Accountants, Ontario, Canada** 2018

Chartered Professional Accountants, British Columbia, Canada 2014

- Qualified through Evaluation of Experience Pathway in November 2013.

**MA in Educational Planning, Economics and International Development (MA EPEID) |
Institute of Education, University College London (formerly University of London)** 2006

- Master's thesis: *The Status of the Teaching Profession in Pakistan: Issues, Challenges and Recommendations.*

Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA) | Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan 1996

- Qualified in first attempt with Gold Medal in the Intermediate stage.

**Fellow Cost and Management Accountant (FCMA) |
Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan** 1995

Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com) | University of Karachi, Pakistan 1992

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Commonwealth Scholarship for MA in Educational Planning, Economics and International Development from University of London-Institute of Education (2005-2006).
- Kasbati Memorial Gold Medal by ICAP for standing first and passing both the groups of CA Intermediate examination simultaneously in first attempt (1994).
- Gold Medal by Board of Secondary Education, Karachi for standing first in the Matriculation (General Group) examination 1988.
- Gold Medal by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (1988).
- Silver Medal by the Board of Intermediate Education, Karachi for standing second in the HSC examination 1990.
- Talent Award 1990.
- Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan Educational Award 1990.
- Dr. Salimuzaman Siddiqui Educational Award 1988.
- Merit Scholarship by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan for HSC, graduation and Chartered Accountancy (1988-1996).

REFERENCES

Available upon request