

# Rahim Somani, EdD, MA, CPA, CA, CPHR, FCA, FCMA

Prince George, British Columbia: *Respectfully grateful to live, work, learn and play on the unceded traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh*

+1 (778) 675-1010 (cell) | [rahim.somani@gmail.com](mailto:rahim.somani@gmail.com)  
[www.linkedin.com/in/RahimSomani-CPA](http://www.linkedin.com/in/RahimSomani-CPA)

## SUMMARY

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With over two decades of senior leadership experience across primary, secondary, and higher education sectors in South and Central Asia, as well as North America, I have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving organizational objectives and building local capacity. My expertise spans educational planning, strategic and financial planning, budgeting, project financing, financial analysis and reporting, human resource management, organization development, management information systems, procurement, general administration, capital projects, facilities management, corporate affairs, internal audit, risk management, and program management.

My credentials include a CPA, CA from British Columbia and Ontario, Canada, an MA in Educational Planning, Economics, and International Development from University College London, an alumnus of the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, and a current pursuit of a Doctor of Education (EdD) in Leadership and Innovation at Arizona State University.

Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to transformative leadership and fostering innovation in challenging environments. I have successfully established institutions, driven change management, and contributed to organizational growth and development, leading to significant societal impact. My experiences have honed my ability to navigate complex settings, make informed decisions, and uphold core values, fostering a culture of accountability and integrity.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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### Strategic Planning and Impact

- Coordinated UNBC's Economic Impact Study, validating the university's significant positive influence on provincial, regional, and local economies. This study highlighted the substantial returns on investments for students, taxpayers, and society.
- Led integrated planning and budget for the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), managing an annual turnover exceeding \$100 million, and overseeing enterprise risk management.
- Developed the Integrated Implementation Plan for the University of Central Asia (UCA), including phasing strategies, financial projections, and a financing model for operations and capital costs totaling \$1.4 billion over 25 years.
- Developed three to five-year rolling plans and budgets for UCA, averaging \$25 million annually in operations from 2008 to 2020.
- Developed 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.
- Designed a comprehensive 15-year strategic plan for AKES, Pakistan, enhancing access to quality education from 30% to 60% for the 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 access study involving the survey of 100,000 households across Pakistan, envisioning long-term aspirations, analyzing challenges, and recommending strategies for holistic development.

- Devised and implemented a long-term educational development plan for Afghan refugees, benefiting over 20,000 children and adults.

### **Program Planning and Implementation**

- Realigned the academic structure of seven Aga Khan Schools in Karachi (over 10,000 students), facilitating single-shift operations and expanding the network of Higher Secondary Schools.
- Conducted a comprehensive portfolio review for all 174 Aga Khan Schools in Northern Pakistan (over 27,500 students), providing recommendations for future development and rationalization.
- Successful final evaluation of the European Commission-funded Northern Pakistan Education Program (NPEP) phase I (€14.4 million), secured an additional €20 million grant for phase II, and formulated and implemented exit strategy to ensure program sustainability.
- Formulated operational plans for introducing pre-primary classes and English as a medium of instruction at 51 Aga Khan Schools, Chitral (over 6,000 students).
- Conceptualized and implemented a successful school preparation and placement program for child refugees, achieving 100% integration and academic success.

### **Financial Management**

- Spearheaded budgeting, financial monitoring, and reporting for UCA's capital projects (Phase I: \$285 million), ongoing operations (\$25 million annually), UNBC operations (over \$100 million annually) and UNBC capital plan submission to the Provincial Ministry.
- Negotiated a \$30 million financing facility from the United States' Overseers Private Investment Corporation for UCA's Khorog campus.
- Implemented financial information systems, internal controls, policies, and procedures, along with IFRS-compliant financial reporting and successful external audits at AKES, UCA and UNBC.
- Established a comprehensive financial assistance program for UCA, including scholarships, grants, and loans, contributing to a total of \$3 million annually.
- Established grant management system 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**

- Implemented in-house construction management strategies for completing Phase I of university campuses (\$200 million) within budget and schedule, ensuring socio-economic benefits to local communities (\$500 million over 25 years).
- Conducted feasibility studies for Aga Khan Higher Secondary Schools, leading to capacity expansion and improved infrastructure.

### **Administrative Services**

- Spearheaded the integration of administrative services across all units of the University, streamlined procurement processes and established procurement policies and arrangements for UCA through effective negotiations and framework contracts.
- Implemented comprehensive insurance provisions for university properties and assets, as well as faculty and staff.

## Human Resource Management and Organizational Development

- Leading transformation of UNBC's Finance and Administration portfolio comprising integrated service strategy, change management, digital transformation, and communication plans.
- Developed capacity-building strategies for local human resources and institutional systems.
- Formulated effective compensation and benefit structures for staff at various institutions, attracting and retaining quality talent; advised on the transition and long-term organizational structure to enhance effective management of AKES, Pakistan, while prioritizing school improvement.
- Created and implemented a field-based planning framework to guide program development, implementation, and monitoring. Tracked key performance indicators to ensure targeted outcomes.
- Enhanced capacity of Afghan refugees for program implementation and future leadership roles.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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

- Providing leadership and oversight over finance, administrative and business services. Leading strategic, financial, and operational planning, and relied on for expertise, leadership, innovation, collaboration, relationship building, organizational development and change management skills.
- Serving as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the UNBC Pension Plan, President and Director of the Northern Sport Centre Limited, Director of the UNBC Land Development Corporation, Director of the Northern Medical Programs Trust, Member of the Investment Advisory Committee, a standing committee of the Finance and Investment Committee of the UNBC Board of Governors, and Member, Steering Committee of the Administrative Services Collaborative.

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

- As a member of the University's senior executive team, played a key role in the planning and development of a multi-campus university, provided leadership and oversight to the Finance Division, oversaw financial management and control, actively participated, and contributed to the strategic planning, university oversight, and development and implementation of financing strategy. Regularly 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**

- Responsible for Corporate Finance, Strategic and Financial Planning, IT Systems, MIS, Human Resources, Administration, Construction Projects, and Corporate Affairs.

### **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 DISSEMINATION

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### Presentations

- Keynote Speaker: “Finance for non-Finance Professionals” organized by UCA for Roshan Afghanistan (October 2022).
- Panelist: “IT Risks and Opportunities from the perspective of the Vice President Administration” at the BCNET Connect 2022 Summit (March 2022).
- “Fostering Organizational Development for People’s Success” at Doctoral Research Conference by the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University (April 2022).
- Speaker: “The Art of Asking Great Questions” organized by UCA (October 2022).
- Financial Literacy Sessions organized by CPA Canada (various).

### Research (unpublished)

- Master’s thesis: 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

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<b>Member   Administrative Services Collaborative</b>	<b>2023 – Present</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member, Steering Committee</li></ul>	
<b>Trustee   Prince George Public Library, British Columbia (B.C.), Canada</b>	<b>2022 – Present</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member, Governance Committee</li></ul>	
<b>Non-Executive Director   Prince George Community Foundation, B.C., Canada</b>	<b>2022 – Present</b>
<b>Non-Executive Director   United Way of Northern British Columbia, Canada</b>	<b>2022 – 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member, Governance and Nominations Committee</li></ul>	
<b>Non-Executive Director   First MicroCredit Company, Kyrgyz Republic</b>	<b>2011 – 2019</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chairperson, Human Capital Committee</li><li>• Permanent Observer, Audit Committee</li></ul>	
<b>Aga Khan Music Initiative   Aga Khan Trust for Culture</b>	<b>2014 – 2017</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member Oversight Group</li></ul>	
<b>Member Finance   National ITREB for Pakistan</b>	<b>2002 – 2005</b>
<b>Member Finance   Ismaili Council for Garden, Karachi, Pakistan</b>	<b>1996 – 2002</b>
<b>Chairperson   Community-Based Education Society/School and</b>	
<b>Ex-Officio   Aga Khan Education Board for Garden, Karachi, Pakistan</b>	<b>1996 – 1998</b>

## EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

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<b>Doctor of Education (EdD) in Leadership and Innovation   Arizona State University</b>	<b>2024</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dissertation: Fostering People's Development for Organizational Success</li></ul>	
<b>Institute for Educational Management (IEM)   Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Chartered Professional Accountant, Chartered Accountant (CPA, CA)   Chartered Professional Accountants, Ontario, Canada</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Chartered Professional Accountants, British Columbia, Canada</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>MA in Educational Planning, Economics, and International Development (MA EPEID)   Institute of Education, University College London (formerly University of London)</b>	<b>2006</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Thesis: Status of Teaching Profession in Pakistan</li></ul>	
<b>Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA)   Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan</b>	<b>1996</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Qualified in first attempt with Gold Medal in the Intermediate stage.</li></ul>	
<b>Fellow Cost and Management Accountant (FCMA)   Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b>Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com)   University of Karachi, Pakistan</b>	<b>1992</b>

## AWARDS AND HONORS

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- 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

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Available upon request