



BRIDGES THAT UNITE

Exploring Canada's global leadership role

What is Canada's role in a world where poverty and hopelessness thrive? Where difference is seen as a threat, not an asset? Where progress means rejecting the past?

With these provocative questions, *Bridges that Unite*, an interactive travelling exhibition, invites visitors to consider Canada's role in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century through the lens of a remarkable 25-year partnership with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

Canada's unique connection to the developing world

Canadians are proud of our strong history in international diplomacy. Few are aware, however, of the steadfast role that Canada has played in some of the world's most isolated and impoverished regions, where it has made a long-term investment in the alleviation of poverty and the creation of strong democratic institutions. The nature of this work requires a long time horizon, and a commitment to social change over a generation or more. In quiet, forceful ways, Canada and Canadians have demonstrated this commitment.

At a time when debate over the effectiveness of development assistance, generally, and Canada's role, specifically, is frequently unmoored from actual experience, *Bridges that Unite* illuminates contemporary global issues in which Canada and the AKDN have amassed significant expertise and insights, including:

- creating spaces for democratic participation and good governance
- educating tomorrow's leaders for a globalized world
- negotiating the role of diverse cultural heritages and traditions in a modern society

Engaging Canadians in a thought-provoking experience

Through the creative interplay of audio, video, text panels, bold graphics and interactive components, *Bridges that Unite* challenges visitors to confront typical assumptions about what international development is and what it can achieve – injecting evidence about Canada's own international experience into the public debate.

Sparking conversations across Canada

Ultimately, the exhibition asks more questions than it answers: Why invest in a university in a country struggling to provide even primary education? Why restore a 16th century garden in war-ravaged Kabul, Afghanistan? Does this past suggest how Canada could lead in the future?

In both content and approach, *Bridges that Unite* seeks to bring together diverse voices, perspectives and experiences from across Canada and around the world in a vibrant and vital public conversation.

21 Questions for the 21st century

At the conclusion of the exhibit, visitors will be invited to contribute by sharing their perspectives on a way forward for Canada in the world. To elicit thoughts and opinions, a feature entitled '21 Questions for the 21st century' invites visitors to consider what they believe to be the most significant global issues – and what assets Canada and Canadians may be able to bring to bear upon them. Responses will be compiled and compared with other regions as the exhibit crosses the country, providing compelling insights into regional perspectives.

A platform for dialogue

In its efforts to catalyze a forward-thinking, informed public debate, *Bridges that Unite* proposes a range of events and programs that will engage diverse sets of key Canadian thinkers and policy influencers in conversations that build on the exhibit's momentum as it travels across the country.

Drawing on the shared experience of Canada and the AKDN in the developing world, *Bridges that Unite* will facilitate debate and dialogue on contemporary attitudes and trends towards critical global issues. Its goal, ultimately, is to inspire a dynamic, constructive and forward-thinking vision for Canada's role in the 21st century.

Continuing the conversation

www.bridgesthatunite.ca

The *Bridges that Unite* website (www.bridgesthatunite.ca) will serve as a resource and platform for discussion. Visitors will also have the opportunity to interact with Canadians who have either returned from, or are currently working with initiatives on the ground in Asia and Africa. These 'Agents of Change' will put a face to Canada's development efforts and answer visitor questions about the challenges and rewards of working in some of the poorest parts of the developing world.

2008 – Commemorating a quarter-century of collaboration

The *Bridges that Unite* exhibition will begin a national tour on February 1, 2008 in Victoria, British Columbia at the Victoria Conference Centre. For more information on the travelling exhibition, including its robust programming component involving panel discussions, lectures, guided tours, cultural events and activities for youth, please visit www.bridgesthatunite.ca or contact Aga Khan Foundation Canada at 1-800-267-2532.

Bridges that Unite is an initiative of Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

Founded by His Highness the Aga Khan IV, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is an international group of non-denominational development agencies that undertakes a wide-ranging humanitarian agenda of social, economic and cultural development.



An initiative of:
AGA KHAN FOUNDATION CANADA
An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

360 Albert Street, Suite 1220, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7

Tel. 1-800-267-2532 / Fax. 613-567-2532

www.akfc.ca