

# SERVICE



Photo: AKDN/Zahur Ramji

“The voluntary sector represents, and can develop, all that is finest in the human potential....The opportunity exists to create.... an enabling environment to bring out the very best of the human potential. And this sector has a tendency to follow a “charity” approach rather than directing itself to the major developments and changes needed for the future.”

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Keynote Address**  
**International Development Conference**  
**Washington, DC**  
**March 18, 1987**

[Speech at The Institute of Ismaili Studies](#)

“We have all seen examples of God's most wonderful creature, the person, whether in a government bureau, a business, or a private development agency, who is inspired to give generously of himself, to go beyond the mechanical requirements of a task.

Such men and women, paid or unpaid, express the spirit of the volunteer, literally the will to make a product better, a school the best, a clinic more compassionate and effective. Their spirit, generating new ideas, resisting discouragement, and demanding results, animates the heart of every effective society.

I submit that one of our great goals, if we are to create an enabling environment of hope and determination, is to give our volunteers opportunities to become more expert and professional — more rational and skilled, without killing their passion.”

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Enabling Environment Conference**  
**Nairobi, Kenya**  
**October 21, 1986**



Photo: The Ismaili Canada

“Service is a means for each individual to actualize Islam’s ethics of inclusiveness, of compassion, of sharing, of the respect for life, and of personal responsibility for sustaining a healthy, physical, social and cultural environment. Fundamental to this concept is generosity of material resources, of time, of thought, and of knowledge. Thought helps others to help themselves. Knowledge enables the educated to provide technical information to the less educated on how to meet their own needs better and serve others.”

**Princess Zahra Aga Khan**  
**International Association for Volunteer Effort**  
**Edmonton, Alberta**  
**August 25, 1998**



Photo: AKDN/Zahur

“This far flung community is characterized despite geographical distances, by its coherence and organization, by its unwavering progressiveness, and by its universal commitment to the welfare of the less fortunate....

The Ismaili community is noteworthy also for its tradition,

deeply embedded in its values and in its very ethos, of the individual voluntarily donating his or her time, effort, intellect, and material resources in the service of others.”

**Prince Aynur Aga Khan**  
**Lisbon, Portugal**  
**February 1996**



Photo: AKDN/Zahur Ramji

In Islam, the Holy Quran offers explicit direction to share resources beyond one’s requirements, and to care for the poor and those in need.

**Mawlana Hazar Imam**  
**Carnegie Medal for**  
**Philanthropy**  
**Edinburgh, Scotland**  
**October 4, 2005**

[Speech at Aga Khan Development Network](#)