

A personal statement for a Summer Internship with the Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

By Tariq Mohammed, Spring, 1998

Being a citizen of the developing world and having lived in five countries, an interest in international development stems from my personal background. In India, my family members are actively involved in the field of development and philanthropy. My relatives are helping to promote health and education initiatives in Assam and Kerala. They are responsible for donating funds to establish local schools, providing public sanitation facilities and advising town planners. In the future I hope to continue their efforts in enriching these communities and others by for an international organization that contributes to the welfare of impoverished citizens.

My last internship was the first step towards understanding the field of international development. During my time with International Development Business Consultants, I was exposed to the world of Multilateral Development Banks and their respective activities. Primarily, I was engaged in preparing and writing a collaborative report on distance education projects in the developing world for a US telecommunications firm. From this project, I was introduced to the numerous players in the development process and became familiar with the telecommunications industry. After completing the report I realized the potential role of the private sector in building partnerships with local municipalities for rural infrastructure projects.

People who do not have water, electricity and adequate sanitation deserve the undying attention of governments, development agencies and charities. The private sector is adept in building and installing devices that can improve rural areas. Since the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is a private, non-governmental organization it is in a position to collaborate with many different groups on a national and international level. This multidimensional facet is what makes the AKF an attractive and effective organization.

I am currently enrolled in a development economics course focusing on human resource issues in Africa and Latin America. An internship with the AKF USA would allow me to put into practice learned concepts and ideas. Participating in seminars and conducting public outreach events would be an excellent opportunity to develop a broad based view of development activities in Asia and Africa. Also interacting with member of the development community will allow me to be prepared for future research.

International development is a dynamic, diverse field that brings together a multitude of people and ideas. Tackling development issues is a long complex procedure that involves careful planning, sincere implementation and thoughtful review. Along with academic endeavors and previous work experience I believe that my cultural awareness and interpersonal skills will benefit AKF USA. I hope by successfully completing an internship with AKF USA, I can transfer skills and knowledge to help pursue a career in international development.