

A Brief Profile of Shamsh Kassim-Lakha

Shamsh Kassim-Lakha is the Founding President of the Aga Khan University the first private university chartered in Pakistan. He led the planning, building and operation of this institution for 27 years in seven countries of Asia, Africa and the United Kingdom.

Shamsh served as Pakistan's Minister of Education as well as Science and Technology in the Caretaker Government in 2007-8. He chairs the board of Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy and sits on the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) as well as the board of International Baccalaureate Organization. He is Senior Distinguished Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto and consults for the World Bank and Grameen Bank. His writings include book chapters and articles on school and higher education, higher education reforms and philanthropy.

Shamsh's public service activities in Pakistan include membership of numerous commissions and committees in diverse fields including the National Commission on Government Reforms, Pay and Pensions Commission as well as Advisory Committees of the Ministries of Finance, Education, Health and Social Welfare. He Chaired the Committee that wrote Pakistan's National Environment Protection Act (1997) and headed the Committee that recommended reforms in higher education in 2001-2, leading to the creation of HEC in Pakistan and substantial improvement in the quality of and funding of higher education. In 1997, he was appointed to the Board of the Habib Bank Ltd on behalf of the government. In 1966 he was elected District Governor of Lions International in Pakistan.

The first two decades of his career were in the jute industry of East Pakistan and in venture capital as Managing Director of Industrial Promotion Services of Pakistan, sponsored by the Aga Khan Development Network. He led the team that built up one of the largest industrial and export houses of Pakistan with a work force of 22,000.

Shamsh received his undergraduate education in the UK and MBA from the University of Minnesota. In recognition of his services he has received an honorary doctorate degree from McMaster University, Canada as well as Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Hilal-e-Imtiaz from the President of Pakistan and Officer of the National Order of Merit from the President of France.