

# Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

## Essay Competition

### GUIDELINES

*Attention High School Students (Grades 9-12):*

#### Eligibility:

Participation in the Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) Essay Competition is limited to high school students enrolled full-time in grades 9 through 12 during the 2008-2009 academic year in schools located in the United States.

#### Deadline:

- Registrations must be received no later than **Friday, October 31, 2008**.
- Essays are to be submitted no later than **Friday, January 23, 2009**.
- No exceptions will be made to these deadlines.
- You must submit your entry as a MS-Word document attached to the e-mail at the following e-mail address: [essays@partnershipsinaction.org](mailto:essays@partnershipsinaction.org) Subject: AKF USA Essay Competition

#### Research:

The competition encourages participants to learn about innovative solutions for reducing poverty in Asia and Africa. It is also designed to help students develop a deeper appreciation of the practical ways for reaching the Millennium Development Goals. By reviewing and researching the impact of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.'s programs and the various agencies of Aga Khan Development Network, students have the opportunity to better understand how solutions to reducing global poverty are not only possible but currently taking place. The competition requires a persuasive essay based on research. Case studies will be available at <http://www.partnershipsinaction.org/essay/>, which will provide participants with current information about actual development projects taking place in Africa and Asia. These case studies can be used for conducting your research as you develop your persuasive essay. Participants are welcomed to research other sources; however, they are responsible for assessing the credibility of the information on which they base their conclusions. In addition, participants can also visit [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org) for further research.

#### Essay Topic / Prompt:

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. For more information about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, visit: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Select one of the MDGs and support how Aga Khan Foundation and Aga Khan Development Network are helping to ensure that this goal is being reached in individual countries and communities worldwide.

MDGs (choose one):

(1) Eradicate extreme poverty; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS malaria and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) Develop a global partnership for development.

#### Step by Step Procedures:

- (1) You must first register on-line at [www.partnershipsinaction.org/essay](http://www.partnershipsinaction.org/essay) by October 31, 2008. Upon registering, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions and a Participant I.D. number. Save that I.D. number for reference. You will need it when you submit your essay.
- (2) To qualify, you must follow the guidelines listed below in terms of length and format. You must email your essay as an attachment to [essays@partnershipsinaction.org](mailto:essays@partnershipsinaction.org) by January 23, 2009. On the front cover page you will include your Participant I.D. number. This number is used instead of your name to keep the writer's identity anonymous during the judging process.
- (3) Approximately, one month after the essay submission deadline, a panel of judges will review the essays and winners will be announced shortly thereafter.

- (4) All participants that submitted qualifying essays will receive a certificate of appreciation and community service hours. The winners will be notified by email and granted cash prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The prizes are as follows: \$500 for 1<sup>st</sup> place, \$250 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and \$150 for 3<sup>rd</sup> place. All winning essays and honorable mentions will be posted on the PartnershipsInAction website.

## Paper Guidelines:

Length of Paper: The required length of the essay is 3-5 pages (800-1000 words), typed (independent of the works cited page). Definite and indefinite articles (the, a, an) do not count. Also, block quotations are not allowed.

Format: Use MLA format for the following: parenthetical documentation (for direct quotations and paraphrasing), margins, and works cited. The paper must be double-spaced, typed in 12 pt. font size, and Times New Roman font. The essay should also be typed in normal or plain text, not bold, italicized, etc.

Title Page: Each essay must have a separate title page. About one-third of the way down the page, center the title. (Capitalize the appropriate first letters, but **do not underline, italicize, or use bold or OVERSIZE** type. If it occupies more than one line, single-space it.) Near the bottom of the page, center your Participant I.D. number and the due date of the paper (each on its own line, single-spaced). The final line should be approximately an inch from the bottom of the page. Required font: Times New Roman. Required size: 12 pt. font.

Headers/Footers: The title of the essay should also appear on the first page of the text, but **do not** put your name or any identifying information anywhere in the body of the essay itself. You must insert page numbers on the top right-hand corner of each page (excluding the title page).

## Judging Criteria:

Essays that meet all the above guidelines will be judged in blind competition by a panel of humanities scholars and educators familiar with the work of high school students. They will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Development of Position: Does the essay demonstrate a thorough understanding of the topic, and is the position effectively and insightfully developed? Does it give clear and specific examples from Aga Khan Foundation and Aga Khan Development Network projects? Does the essay offer a persuasive analysis of the sources of a particular idea or set of ideas? Does it have a clear and well-supported point of view?

Organization: Is the information organized in an effective way that advances a particular idea? Is the essay clearly focused?

Use of Language: Does the writer display skillful use of language? Does the writer's use of language enhance the originality of the essay? Is a unique voice/perspective underlying the actual information? Is the vocabulary accurate? Does the writer have a good sense of connotative diction?

Sentence Structure: Does the writer demonstrate a meaningful and a skilled variety of sentence structure?

Grammar: Has correct mechanics, usage, and grammar been used?

Important information: See **Persuasive Essay Rubric** for details on the grading criteria (on next page).

### Waiver:

You agree to grant to Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide the right to publicly display and transmit the essay you submit to the competition by e-mail to Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. You also grant to Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. the right to use your name in connection with the submitted materials as well as in connection with all advertising, marketing and promotional material related thereto. You agree that you shall have no recourse against Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. for any alleged or actual infringement or misappropriation of any proprietary right in your communications to Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

## Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. Essay Competition ~ Persuasive Essay Rubric

Score	Development of Position	Organization	Use of Language	Sentence Structure	Grammar and Word Usage
1	No plausible position is taken on the topic; severely <i>lacking</i> in examples, reasons and/or evidence	Disorganized; little or no focus; incoherent	Contains fundamental vocabulary mistakes	Severely flawed sentence structure	Grammar & word usage are so poor that they interfere with meaning; very poor mechanics (like punctuation)
2	Position on topic is unclear or extremely limited; <i>inappropriate</i> examples or reasons; <i>insufficient</i> evidence of AKDN projects	Poorly organized; lacks focus; problems with coherence or flow of ideas	Poor use of language; indicates very limited vocabulary & poor word choice	Frequent problems with sentence structure	Grammar and word usage mistakes are frequent and interfere with meaning; poor mechanics
3	Position on topic demonstrates critical thinking skill applied inconsistently; <i>vague</i> example/evidence of AKDN projects are used, & <i>inadequate</i> reasons given	Limited in organization & focus; demonstrates lapses in coherence or flow of ideas	Displays developing use of language; contains indications of weak vocabulary & poor word selection	Some problems with sentence structure; lacks a variety of sentence structures	Contains many mistakes in grammar word usage & mechanics
4	Position on topic demonstrates competent critical thinking skill; <i>adequate</i> example/evidence is given from AKDN projects, & reasons are also <i>adequate</i>	Generally organized & focused; demonstrates some coherence & attention to the flow of ideas	Displays adequate, but inconsistent, use of language; vocabulary used is generally appropriate	Good sentence structure; demonstrates some variety of sentence structure	Contains some mistakes in grammar, word usage & mechanics
5	Position is <i>effectively</i> developed through strong critical thinking skill; examples/evidence are <i>specifically</i> given from AKDN projects, & reasons are <i>generally appropriate</i>	Well organized & focused; demonstrates coherence & ideas flow well	Displays competent use of language; uses appropriate vocabulary	Good sentence structure; demonstrates variety in sentence structure	Generally free of mistakes in grammar, word usage & mechanics
6	Position <i>effectively &amp; insightfully</i> developed through outstanding critical thinking skill; examples/evidence are <i>explicitly &amp; specifically</i> given from AKDN projects, & reasons are <i>clearly appropriate</i>	Well organized & clearly focused; clearly coherent & ideas flow seamlessly	Displays skillful use of language; vocabulary is accurate & varied; words are appropriately & skillfully chosen	Good sentence structure; demonstrates meaningful & skilled variety of sentence structure	Free of most mistakes in grammar, word usage & mechanics