

News Release
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**EXTRAORDINARY EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS MADE BY YOUTH IN
FOUR COUNTRIES OPENS AT THE ISMAILI CENTRE TORONTO**



**Our Stories, Our Images, Our Futures:
Photographs made by Youth from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India and Canada
On View April 30 – May 31, 2016**

The media is invited to an exhibition preview on Friday, April 29, 10am-12pm,
at the Ismaili Centre Toronto.

TORONTO, ON (April 21, 2016) – An extraordinary exhibition of more than 120 photographs made by youth in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, and Canada will be exhibited at the Ismaili Centre Toronto as part of the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. In the hands of these young artists, the camera reveals beautiful worlds and inspiring futures.

Since 2014, twenty youth (10 boys and 10 girls), 14-18 year-olds, from urban and rural backgrounds in each country have acquired remarkable technical proficiency with cameras and editing, aesthetic sensibilities and story-telling skills. With cameras in hand, they strode fearlessly into emergency rooms and industrial sites, attended respectfully to elders, indulged the play of younger children, and opened their hearts to nature.

More than just an exhibit of photographs, *Our Stories, Our Images, Our Futures* shows how putting a camera into a young person's hands gives them a visual vocabulary and voice that transforms their life and provides them with a new outlook

on the world around them.

Curated by Zulfikar Hirji (York University) & Fredric Roberts (The Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops), the exhibition is the outcome of a unique collaboration between the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and The Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops.

Caroline Arnold, Director of Education at the Aga Khan Foundation said: “Education provides the underpinning for positive social change in all the contexts where we work and is thus central to AKDN. Our aim is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that help them interact effectively with the world and contribute to society. The Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops has not only provided young people in four countries with new knowledge and skills, it has empowered them to tell their own stories.”

Fredric Roberts, Director of The Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops said: “Our program empowers high school aged students around the world to express themselves through photography. The impact goes far beyond learning the technical aspects of taking photographs. We profoundly change the lives of these students by enabling them to use their unique voice, with a new level of confidence and self-esteem, to tell their stories. The beauty, power and sensitivity of their work clearly illustrate how well they have learned this new language.”

More details about the exhibition, including a list of photographers, exhibition contributors, as well as related public events, can be found at www.ourstories.org.

ABOUT THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of development agencies with mandates that include the environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprise and the revitalisation of historic cities. AKDN agencies conduct their programmes without regard to faith, origin or gender. www.akdn.org

ABOUT THE FREDRIC ROBERTS PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

The Fredric Roberts Photography Workshops empowers high school-aged students around the world with the ability to express themselves through the medium of photography. Award-winning photographer Fredric Roberts leads the workshops with the assistance from a faculty of world-class photographers and teachers. Using a format developed by Mr. Roberts, each seven-day workshop trains a group of 20 students to use professional photographic techniques and take photographs centering on particular themes, such as the environment, health issues or education. fredricrobertsworkshops.org

ABOUT THE ISMAILI CENTRES

The Ismaili Centres are symbolic markers of the permanent presence and core values of Shia Ismaili Muslim communities around the world. The Centres reflect the Ismaili community’s intellectual and spiritual understanding of Islam, its social conscience,

its forward outlook and its commitment to progress in the societies in which it lives. Incorporating spaces for social and cultural gatherings, intellectual engagement and reflection, as well as spiritual contemplation, the Ismaili Centres are bridges of friendship and understanding that serve to enhance relationships among faith communities, government and civil society. Ismaili Centres are located in Dubai, Dushanbe, Lisbon, London, Toronto, and Vancouver. www.theismaili.org

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