Mr. Zia U. Khan
MS, MBA, MAC, MA, CPA, and CMA
CEO and Founder Panacloud (Pvt.) Ltd. and Panaverse LLC
COO and Founder PIAIC and Governor Sindh Initiative for Artificial Intelligence, Web 3.0 & Metaverse
https://www.linkedin.com/in/ziaukhan/

**A Nation-Building Journey of 40 Years**

Zia Khan was born in Sialkot in 1961 in an army garrison. His father the late Lt. Col. Inam Ullah Khan was an army officer who had been posted to Sialkot in an artillery regiment. The family moved throughout Pakistan in different positions. The events and tragedy of December 1971 had a deep impact on his thinking and psyche. He felt that he had to do something to turn the future of his beloved Pakistan around. However, exactly what needed to be done remained a mystery to him.

Zia completed his matriculation from Habib Public School in Karachi in 1977 in the first division. For the next few years, he knew that he would spend his life working for the betterment of his country but the specifics of the solution eluded him. First, he thought that he would join the army and become a great worrier however after careful thought he concluded that this would not address the issues facing the country. Becoming a politician was another option considered but after careful consideration was rejected. There came the period when he thought that becoming a businessman and financial wizard might help him transform the country. However, later he realized that this might not be enough.

By 1985 Zia Khan had come to realize that the reason Pakistan and other Muslim nations were behind the West and other nations was because of being way behind in technology and education. This downward trend started way back in the 15th century when we failed to adopt the printing press and other technologies. Then we missed the first, second, and third industrial revolutions, resulting in the current state of affairs. This degeneration of society cannot be resolved with political, economic, religious, educational, or military reforms alone. A movement to transform the culture is required which creates a love of knowledge and technology in the masses. It may take a generation or two to achieve its objectives but it is the only way.

Zia now had the realization of what needed to be done however he also realized that he was unfit to start such a movement. He was an average student with very limited capabilities. However, one thing was decided in his mind that he would spend the rest of his life pursuing this goal with complete disregard for personal benefits and goals. He would not focus on raising a family or getting a good job or what other people do but focus 16 hours a day and 7 days a week on achieving this one national objective.

Zia had decided to go to the USA to get the best possible interdisciplinary education. The plan was to develop expertise in business, engineering, accounting, finance, and economics. After completing his Master's in Economics

from Karachi, in 1987 he was admitted in triple master's degrees at Arizona State University (ASU) i.e. MBA, MS, and MAC, and also became a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA) in the USA. By December 1992 he had completed these and was ready to take on the world.

At the start of 1993 Zia moved to Silicon Valley and with his friends incorporated Xenosys Corporation in California. He did not opt to apply for a green card but preferred to work on a temporary worker H1 visa. The company's office was in Sunnyvale and it worked on hardware and software solutions. After 1995 the main focus was on Java technologies with Intel and other companies as its clients. By the end of 1999 Zia had gained a lot of experience in technology as well as in business therefore he thought it was now time to move back to Pakistan to start the nation-building movement to transform Pakistan.

In October of 1999, Zia returned to Karachi intending to set up a technology company but soon realized that the skill level of most IT graduates in Pakistan was not up to the mark. After teaching in several institutions he also realized that they were not the solution but the source of the problem. To try to make an impact he started teaching to anyone willing to listen. It started with free classes being held on the stairs of multi-storied buildings. But soon Sir Syed University offered their campus for these free classes on Sundays. When the word got around about free classes so many people started showing up that it became also impossible to manage and hold these classes. To reduce the size of the students the university started charging Rs. 2,500 per semester, which the university kept to cover their expenses. After the first semester, the realization came that more teachers were needed; therefore the best students of the first semester were selected to become teachers. To pay these new teachers the university agreed to allocate a budget of 40% of the fee for the teachers. Zia's role was that of teacher trainer, manager, and author of syllabi.

A new working model was being formed where the space of universities and institutions was used on Sundays to teach at extremely low fees, with all teachers being homegrown. This model was replicated all over Karachi with tens of institutions participating. It system also started spreading to other cities like Hyderabad, Lahore, and Quetta. Zia was himself going to other cities to teach free of cost.

By September of 2001 the movement with the brand name of "Operation Bader" was growing exponentially and spreading like wildfire all across the country with more than 20 institutions participating and tens of thousands of students participating in the eighteen-month program. The students were getting good-paying jobs domestically and internationally without even completing the program.

With 9/11 everything changed. International companies stopped giving software development contracts to Pakistani companies. Western countries stopped giving visas to Pakistani software developers. Most Pakistani software companies had to close shops because of a lack of business, resulting in massive unemployment of

software developers in Pakistan. As a result, the interest of students in Operation Badar plunged. The student body was reduced to a few hundred students.

For the next decade, the movement was reduced to a single institution i.e. Sir Syed University with a few hundred students being taught on Sundays. However, the bright side of this winter was a core team of battle-hardened core group was formed which had the confidence that they could survive under any circumstance and carry the mission forward.

With freelancing picking up globally, slowly the environment started changing in Pakistan. Some of Zia's students started making good money while working for international companies and startups on freelancing platforms. International contracts again started flowing into Pakistani companies thus creating domestic jobs. The expansion of the movement again started when new institutions started joining the cause. A breakthrough was achieved when Saylani Welfare Trust joined the movement and started offering free classes in 2013.

In 2018 Dr. Arif Alvi became the President of Pakistan after the new government took power in Pakistan. He had an extreme interest in technology and as a result, the Presidential Initiative for Artificial Intelligence and Computing (PIAIC) was born. PIAIC has trained thousands of students in cutting-edge technologies and is continuing to do so. You can also take admissions in PIAIC by visiting the website https://www.piaic.org/

In 2023 the team and Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori started the Initiative for Artificial Intelligence, Web 3.0 & Metaverse in Governor House Sindh in Karachi. More than 500,000 students have applied for this free one-year program. All the applicants have appeared in the entrance examinations. 50,000 students have qualified for onsite classes, and the rest will join the online classes. The classes in this program are about to start. The complete details about the program are available at https://www.governorsindh.com/