Partnerships Rooted in an Ethical Framework:
A Case Study and Insights from the Aga Khan University

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OVERVIEW
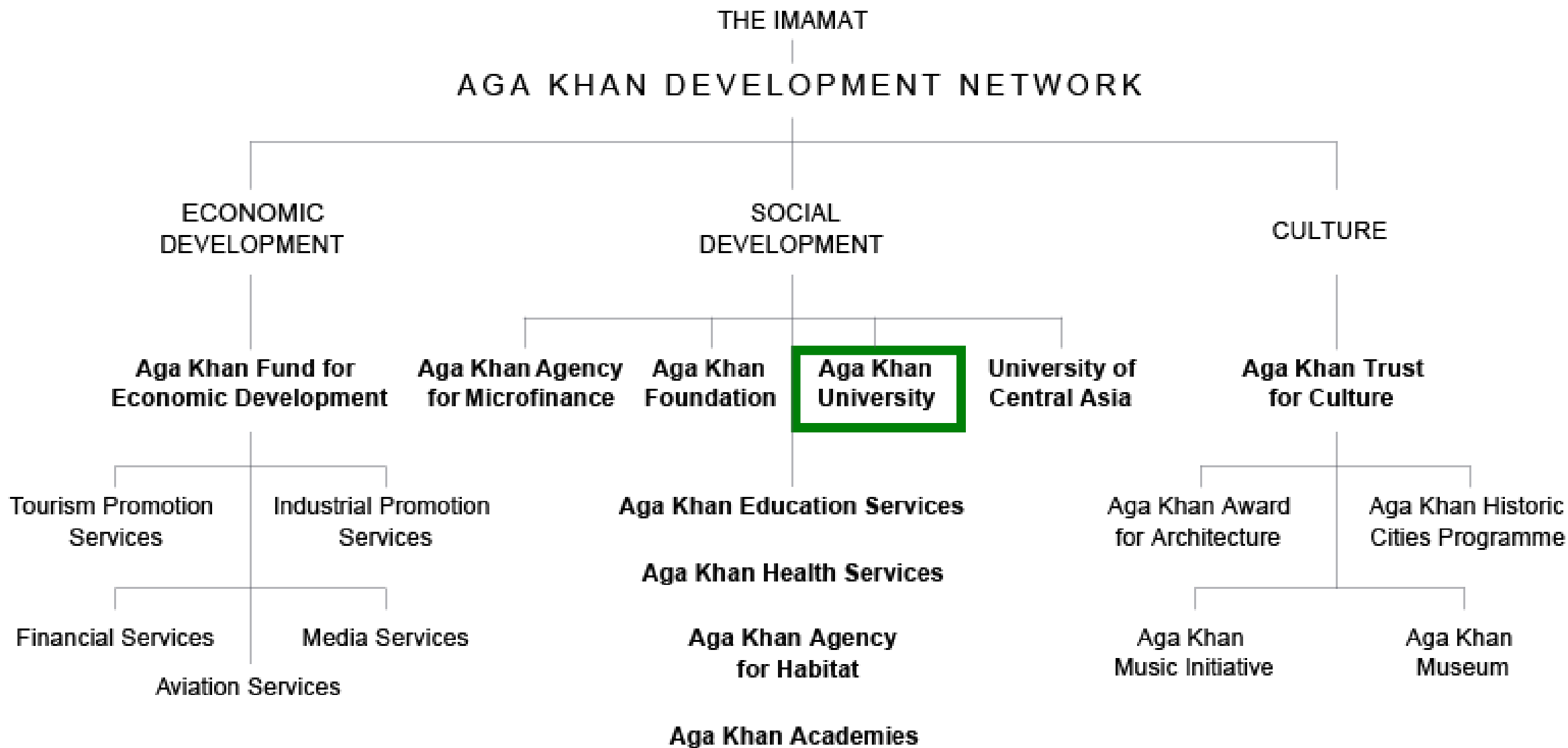
- Context on AKDN/AKU

- Partnership Vision and Ethical Framework

- Partnership Dilemmas – Leading from the South

- Takeaways

THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (AKDN)

- A network of integrated agencies and institutions working across 30 countries

- Holistic approach to *improving the quality of life* of communities in Asia and Africa

- Focus on Economic, Social and Cultural Development

THE IMAMAT

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CULTURE

Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development

Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance

Aga Khan Foundation

Aga Khan University

University of Central Asia

Aga Khan Trust for Culture

Tourism Promotion Services

Industrial Promotion Services

Aga Khan Education Services

Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme

Financial Services

Media Services

Aga Khan Health Services

Aga Khan Music Initiative

Aga Khan Museum

Aviation Services

Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

Aga Khan Academies

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY (AKU)

A private, not for profit, university founded in 1983 with a vision to:

- Educate Leaders
- Conduct Research with Purpose
- Achieve World-Class Excellence
- Serve Local Communities
- Catalyst for Change

AKU AT A GLANCE

2,873
CURRENT STUDENTS

6
COUNTRIES

15,275
FACULTY AND STAFF

9
CAMPUSES AND TEACHING SITES

16,827
ALUMNI

7
HOSPITALS

IMPACT

1:1
FEMALE TO MALE RATIO FOR FACULTY

2.2M
NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED ANNUALLY

30K +
TEACHERS TRAINED

65%
STUDENTS RECEIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

$ 1 BILLION
ECONOMIC IMPACT IN PAKISTAN AND SUPPORTING NEARLY 42,000 JOBS

PARTNERSHIP VISION
&
ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

AKU'S CONTEXT

- Partnerships critical to AKU's growth

- However, realized early on:
  - Partners had diverse motivations and expectations
  - Partnership policies and benefits were asymmetrical in nature
  - Positioning as the "Big brother"
  - Results were partner-driven

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Prioritizing what we wanted in a partnership

Building internal systems and processes

Understanding our value and our context

Communicating our position- brand

Becoming a partner of consequence

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Appropriateness to Vision and Mission
- Impact
- Access
- Quality
- Shared Leadership and Decision-making
- Mutual Reciprocity
- Relevance
- Trust and Transparency
- Good Governance

DUE DILIGENCE

(longevity and credibility of partner, clear engagement, communities of champions, exit strategy-risk and opportunity, mobilization of resources

ACCOUNTABILITY

(top-down- bottom-up, Agreed upon proposals, systems and processes
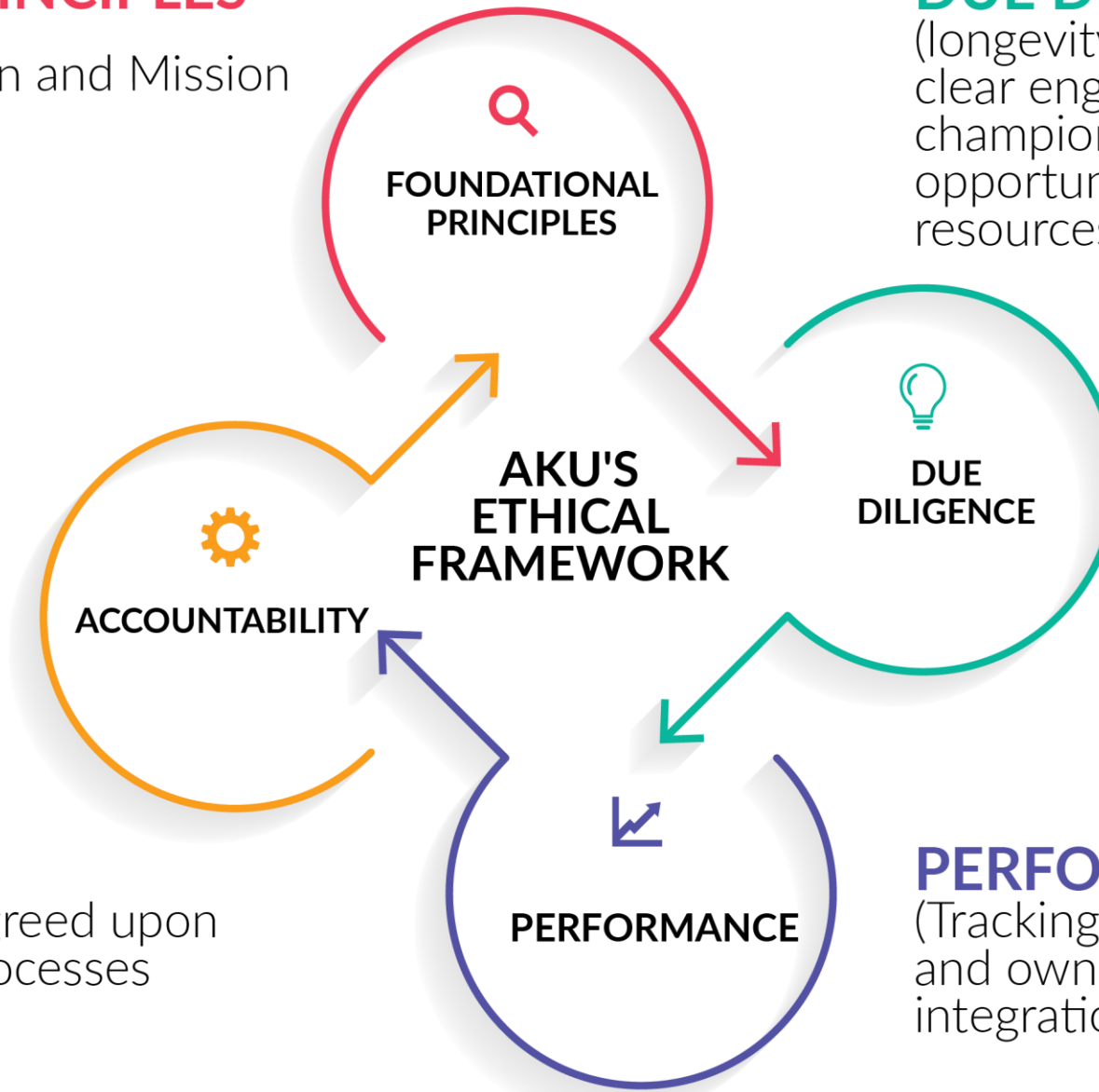
PERFORMANCE

(Tracking and monitoring, buy in and ownership, synergy and integration, performance metrics

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

DUE DILIGENCE

AKU'S ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

ACCOUNTABILITY

PERFORMANCE

PROGRESS MADE

2008	2021
AKU Focused	AKDN Focused
Unidirectional	Bidirectional
Big Brother Relationship	Mutual Reciprocity
Duplication and Overlap	Systems and Processes
Ad-Hoc	Depth and Breadth
Transactional	Transformative
MOUs	Project Agreements
Short Term	Long Term
Limited Funding	Increased Funding Opportunities
Low Impact	High Impact
Lack of due diligence	Conditions for Success

PARTNERSHIP DILEMMAS

MOBILITY – THE GAME CHANGER

CHALLENGES	WIN WIN
Implementation was decoupled from the pre and post internship process	Flipped it- rooted it in the partnership model- joint development
Inconsistency across partners around practice and policy	Worked with partners to create policy, practice, systems
Focus on the numbers game at the national level	Flexible but clear expectations on quality vs. quantity
Student-driven	Impact driven- benefits to students, partner and host

Examples: Timing; Orientation; Professional Development Sessions- e.g. Reciprocal Internships
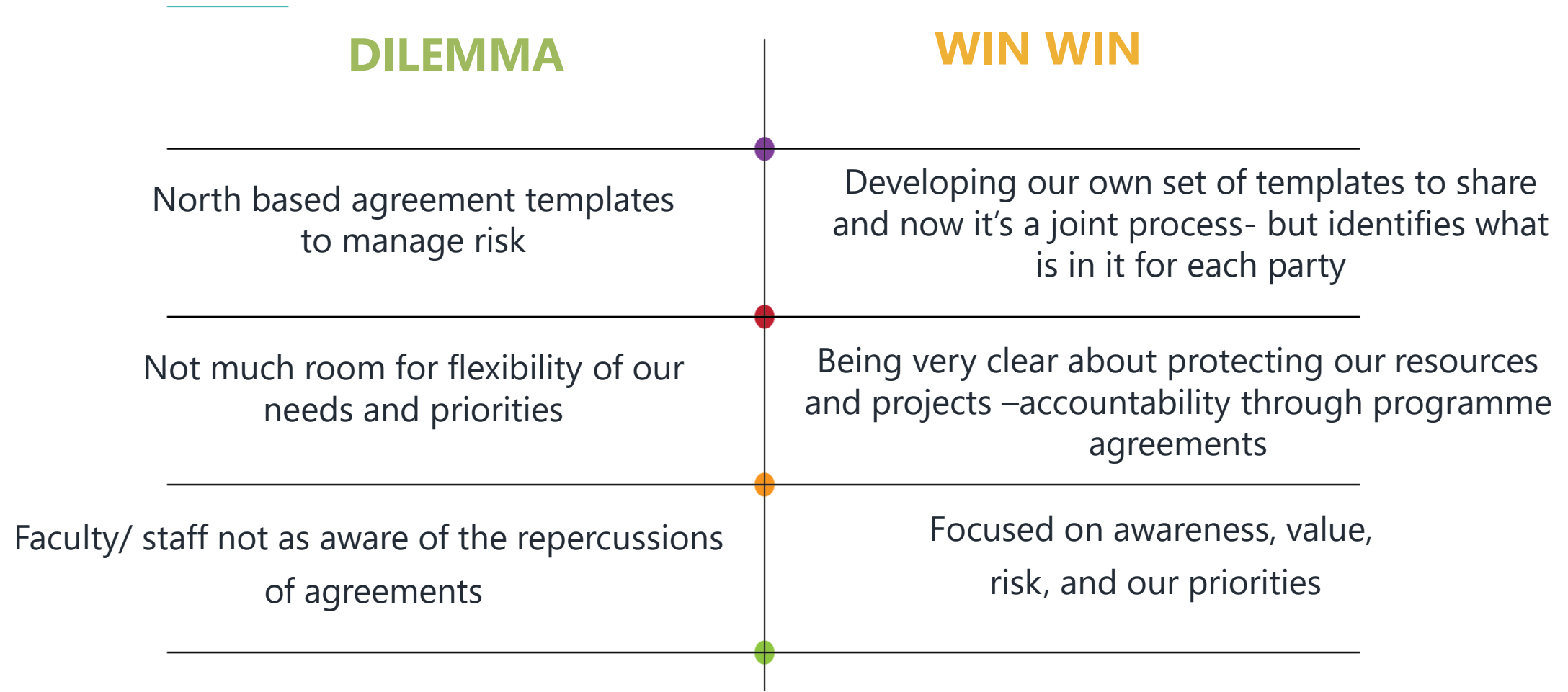
SPECIALTY TRAINING THE SANDWICH WAY

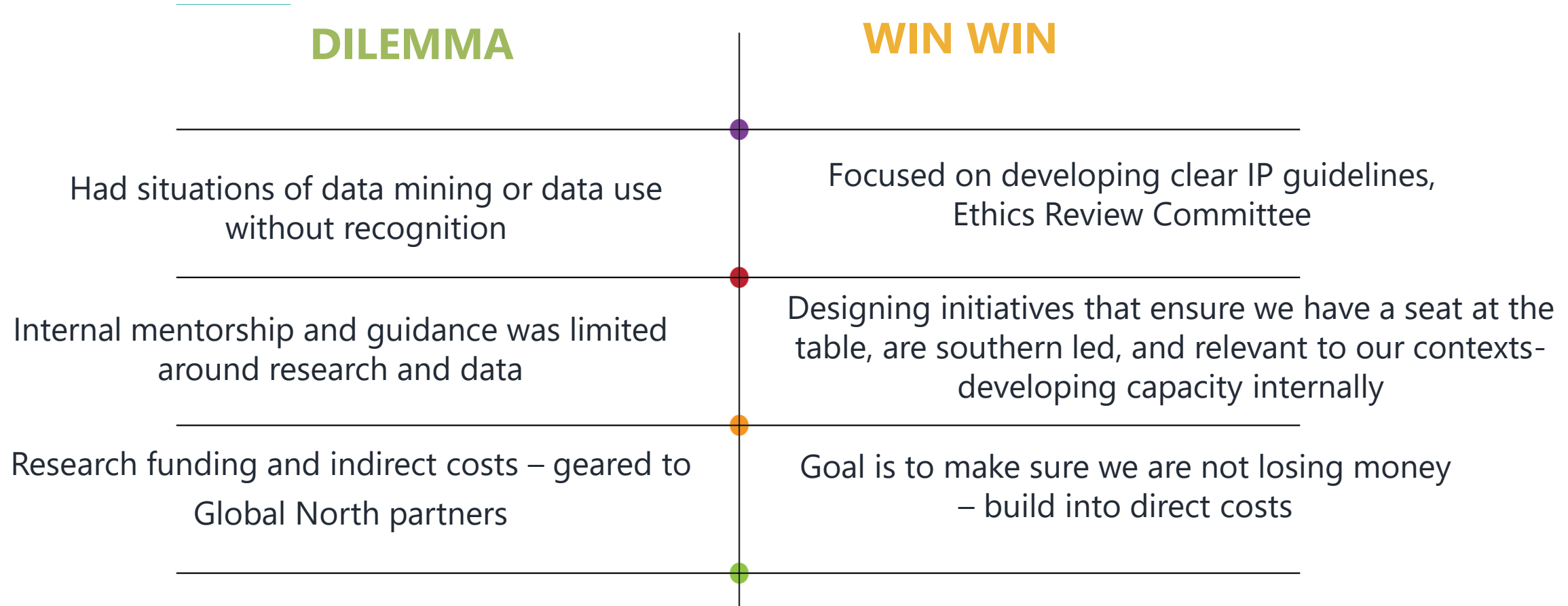| CHALLENGE	WIN WIN
Fit into "Capacity Development Models" from partner institutions	Co-developing models – built in connections to partner and host
Brain drain	Can't stop it, but working with partners to develop alternative opportunities
Lack of an enabling environment at AKU to support growth	Worked with partners to create joint opportunities, co-supervision, building in opportunities to work with partners etc.

Examples: Creation of a "sandwich" model that allows students and faculty to train at partner institutions but a flanked by time at AKU- co supervision and joint research

AGREEMENTS- LEARNING BY EXAMPLE

DILEMMA

WIN WIN

North based agreement templates to manage risk

Developing our own set of templates to share and now it's a joint process- but identifies what is in it for each party

Not much room for flexibility of our needs and priorities

Being very clear about protecting our resources and projects –accountability through programme agreements

Faculty/ staff not as aware of the repercussions of agreements

Focused on awareness, value, risk, and our priorities

Examples: Issue of jurisdiction, and student mobility

RESEARCH AND DATA-LEADING GROUND UP

DILEMMA

WIN WIN

Had situations of data mining or data use without recognition

Focused on developing clear IP guidelines, Ethics Review Committee

Internal mentorship and guidance was limited around research and data

Designing initiatives that ensure we have a seat at the table, are southern led, and relevant to our contexts-developing capacity internally

Research funding and indirect costs – geared to Global North partners

Goal is to make sure we are not losing money – build into direct costs

Examples: Ethics Review Committee, IP policy, data policies, data governance frameworks

TAKEAWAYS

TAKEAWAYS

- Everyone has a role to play

- Its all about reflection and perspective

- Breaking down structural inequalities take time and effort

- Understanding the value of partnerships- might not always be equal but can be equally valuable

- Sharing best practices as a way to develop new models

"The key to building partnerships -- whether they are among social sectors or among countries -- is a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation -- a readiness to share the work, to share the costs, to share the risks, and to share the credit. In the end, what it will require most ... is a spirit of mutual trust."

(Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Conference on Central Asia and Europe: A New Economic Partnership for the 21st Century Berlin - November 13, 2007).

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

www.akdn.org / www.aku.edu