



Seniors Advisory Board (SAB)

Report for the Term 2003 – 2006

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**THE
WORLD
FEDERATION**

OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Registered charity in the UK No. 282303



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Seniors Advisory Desk attained 'Board' status at the last Triennial Conference in 2003.
- 1.2 This report will summarise the activities of the Board during the last 3 years, and will give recommendations for the next term.

2 DISCUSSION

2.1 The Hadith-e-Kisa Blanket Drive

The Drive was launched in February 2004. The aim was to spread the warmth to those poor and destitute seniors who were DYING in the bitter cold by providing them with warm blankets. The purpose was to educate the WF global community of the plight of these destitute seniors and address their needs through the esteem and exalted personalities of the Ahlul Kissa (AS).

- 2.1.1 Since inception, over 10,000 blankets have been distributed in the regions of Bihar (India), Gilgit and Skardu (Northern Pakistan). The Board has worked alongside NASIMCO and COEJ to finance this project.
- 2.1.2 The Board is currently looking into the needs of other areas and will provide blankets for Seniors during the 2006 winter season.

2.2 The Al-Qa'im Sponsor Our Seniors (SOS) Program

During the Hadith-e-Kisa Blanket Drive, the Board determined that many Seniors lacked the basic necessities for survival. This project was launched to alleviate their suffering on the 15th Shabaan 1426.

- 2.2.1 This initiative provides both monthly assistance to seniors, as well as one off payments in times of need. Sponsorships allow Seniors to obtain basic living essentials including healthy meals, clothes and access to primary medical care.
- 2.2.2 Currently, SAB is sponsoring 249 seniors on a monthly basis:
 - 120 – India
 - 100 - Iraq
 - 59 - Pakistan

2.3 The Hajj Niyabah (Proxy) Program

This program was first launched in November 2004; to arrange Hajj Niyabahs (by proxy) on behalf of Seniors who have not yet performed their obligatory Hajj or who have passed away without having completing the Hajj.



2.3.1 Each year, under the guidance of Maulana Ali Naqi Zaidi, the Board prearranges the services of a number of Na'ibs who are available to perform the Hajj on behalf of seniors.

2.3.2 The cost of each Niyabah is \$2000. The Board will be offering this program this year

2.4 **Mulla Asghar Tribute CD**

The Board launched a CD entitled "Faith, Knowledge, Wisdom" (March 2005) as a tribute to Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer on the 5th anniversary of his demise. The CD contained six lectures in Gujarati.

2.4.1 In June 2006, the Board launched a subsequent CD - "Faith, Knowledge, Wisdom – Part II". This CD features 5 Gujarati lectures also recited by Marhum Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer.

2.5 **Muharram Matam CD** by Al-Hajj Husein Bandali

The CD features 8 Nawhas recorded in Florida and was released in February 2005 in memory of Habib ibne Mazahir.

2.6 **"A Tribute to Maa" CD** by Maulana Syed Mohamemd Naqvi

This CD contained 13 shairees recorded live at the SAB Senior Citizens Summer Retreat held in Ontario in July 2004.

2.7 **Housing – Vancouver, Canada**

In March 2006, the Board was approached by the Shia Community of British Columbia to participate in a feasibility study for a proposed Seniors' Housing Project. The Board has assisted in the following ways:

- 'The Needs Assessment Survey' can be used by any community to determine the demand for seniors housing, and a template is available on the website.
- 'The Challenges of Seniors Housing Projects' document outlined challenges faced when embarking upon a housing project for Seniors. This document is also available online.
- Funding for a feasibility study has been located by the Board, and this information has been passed on to the SMCBC to allow a professional organisation to conduct a feasibility study there.

2.8 **Housing - Karachi, Pakistan**

The Board was approached by the Senior Citizens' Forum of Karachi to look into the creation of a Seniors Housing Project. The Board is working with its Pakistan Regional Representative, Ali-Raza Lakhani to determine the viability of the projects.



- 2.8.1 At the 2004 Senior Citizens Summer Retreat (Ontario), a special meeting took place between the SAB, the then Vice President (Marhum Sultanbhai Davdani) and SAB Regional Representatives to determine the scope of this project.

2.9 **Housing – Milton Keynes, UK**

The Board was approached by the Milton Keynes Jamaat to look into the possibility of developing a Seniors Housing Project. The Board visited the proposed site for the project in 2003.

- 2.9.1 Working alongside the European Regional Representative (Ramzanbhai Dhanji), the Board met with Milton Keynes Jamaat and COEJ to discuss this project. Milton Keynes Jamaat has nearly completed its feasibility study, and the Board is waiting to hear from them as to whether they wish to move forward with this project.

2.10 **Housing - Toronto, Canada**

The Senior Citizens Group of Toronto contacted SAB to assist them with their Seniors Housing Project. The Board helped them identify their needs, a location for the project and a grant to conduct a feasibility study.

- 2.10.1 The Board is working with its North American Regional Representative (Shirinbai Sumar) to determine the viability of creating a seniors housing project in Toronto. This project will commence when Phase One of the Bathurst Project is completed.

2.11 **Assistance to Seniors Groups**

One of the goals of the Board is to facilitate the development of Senior Citizen bodies across the World Federation KSI communities.

- 2.11.1 In Europe, the SAB Regional Representative visited all European Jamaats in 2004 to raise awareness of the SAB and to help facilitate the creation of seniors groups where needed. Most of the communities in Europe have active seniors groups. Trollhatten Jamaat (Sweden) recently formed a Seniors Group in March 2006.

- 2.11.2 In Kutch / Gujarat, the SAB Regional Representative visited all Jamaats in March 2005 and laid the groundwork for facilitating seniors groups there.

- In Kutch, Ramzanali Bhai visited Jamaats in Bhujj, Mundra, Kera and Nangalpur; in Gujarat, he visited Morbi, Malya, Bhavnagar, Rajula, Mahuva, Talluja and Ahmdabad.
- With the cooperation of the people of Kutch and Gujarat, Ramzanali Bhai was able to address different congregations, meet with the leaders of the communities and most importantly network with the Seniors at a personal level to discuss issues that affect them.



2.11.3 In Pakistan, the SAB Regional Representative, Ali Raza Lakhani visited Hyderabad Jamaat in Pakistan in November 2004 to help facilitate a seniors group there. A vibrant and dynamic group already exists in Karachi.

2.11.4 In East Africa, the SAB Regional Representative visited the Dar-e-Salaam Jamaat in February 2006 to catalyse the formation of a seniors group.

2.11.5 The Board is now working alongside NASIMCO and the Africa Federation to determine the number of seniors groups in their respective regions. In other areas, the Board has been able to appoint the following regional representatives:

- Ramzanali Dhanji – Europe
- Dr. Shabbir Alibhai & Shirinbai Sumar – North America
- Ali Raza Lakhani - Pakistan

2.12 INFOCUS Magazine

INFOCUS is a new newsletter published by the World Federation which features the activities of Boards and Desks. The first issue of INFOCUS was published in April 2006 and featured the activities of the SAB.

2.13 The Senior Citizens Summer Retreat

From July 30th to August 2nd 2004, the Board organized the first Senior Citizens Summer Retreat at Mountain Springs Lodge Resort in Ontario. Over 90 Seniors from all over the world including many distinguished guests participated. Activities included an evening boat cruise, medical talks, and shairee programs.

2.13.1 Specifically, the goals for the Retreat were to:

- Meet the medical, emotional and social needs of the participants
- Encourage Seniors to network
- Ascertain their collective needs

2.14 Medical Needs of Seniors

The Board, in partnership with the MAB, have tried to meet the medical needs of Seniors in our communities across the world. In February 2005, the Board met with the MAB to discuss medical concerns facing our elders. The Boards have agreed a "Milton Keynes Pact", enabling us to work collectively towards improving the medical support offered to our Seniors.

2.14.1 A three-point Action Plan (April 2005) aimed at developing a comprehensive medical strategy for our Seniors. It comprises of:

- A Medical Screening Program – the Boards have identified the core medical tests that all Seniors should undergo, and are implementing its facilitation in all Jamaats.
- Flu Vaccination Awareness Program – an annual program to highlight the importance of obtaining the injection



- Islamic Medical Ethics Network (IMEN) – fatwas on Islamic Medical Ethics can be displayed on the website, allowing global viewing. Dr Shabbir Alibhai is a specialist in geriatric medicine, and has done a lot of research in this area.

2.15 Upgrading Medical Facilities in Holy Shrines

A joint initiative between the Board and the MAB in March 2006 raised funds to upgrade the first-aid rooms in each of the 6 Holy Shrines in Iraq. The cost of each upgrade is \$3300, with the full amount raised. The upgrading is currently underway.

2.16 Seniors' Computer Training

The Board had received requests from Seniors enquiring about the possibility of training on how to use the internet effectively. In April 2006, SAB launched the "Ba'qirayn ILM Course for Seniors" (Internet Learning Module) – a step by step booklet, in Gujarati or English, which guides seniors on how to operate a computer. This instruction booklet can be downloaded from the website & hard copies can be purchased from the Board at a nominal charge. Information cards were mailed to each household worldwide to market this program.

2.17 Tafseer Audio Tapes

The board launched 6 audio-tapes of various selected tafseers in Gujarati. This pilot project was launched in November 2004 in Vancouver, Canada and was extremely successful.

2.18 Recognising Our Seniors

Each month, the board profiles an outstanding senior in order to highlight their service to the community. The aim is to draw attention to the efforts of our elders as fundamental pillars of our community and inspiration to younger generations. The outstanding senior is nominated by members of our community.

- 2.18.1 The board has declared the 10th of Shawaal, the day when our beloved Imam-e-Zamana (as) entered into ghaybat-e-kubra, as SAB grandparents' day to recognise and appreciate our seniors. The first grandparents' day was held on November 13, 2005.

2.19 Seniors' Database

The board has been working accumulate information to create a database of seniors globally. It is critical that this work is completed, as it would strengthen the ability of the board to understand the needs of our seniors, and the data will aid communication from the board to seniors worldwide.



- 2.19.1 We have received about 450 forms from most Jamaats in Europe, Pakistan, Dubai and North America. The board is working with the team to create a user-friendly seniors' database for the website.

2.20 Personalities E-Book

The e-book of personalities was launched in February 2006, and is on the website. It profiles the lives of 12 individuals from the Shia Ithna Asheri Muslim community dating as far back as the early 1900's. These personalities were selected because they were instrumental in helping to shape our global community. The board extends a special thanks to Hasnain bhai Walji for his efforts in this work.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Continuation Of Current Programs

The seniors advisory board will develop a global strategy in order to fulfill the requirements of our seniors. The board will work closely with the regional bodies in order to execute an action plan for each region.

The board will continue its current programs, including the hajj niyabah program, the personalities e-book, development of the seniors' database and; in partnership with the mab; furthering our work in the field of seniors' health.

3.2 Project Hope & Save

Hope = halt and overcome poverty in the elderly
Save = spend for allah and value the elderly

- 3.2.1 The intention of the project is to raise awareness about old-age poverty in our community and to reduce it. The board's work is concentrated in northern Pakistan, India and Iraq, where the board has launched the hadith-e-kisa blanket drive and the al-qa'im sponsor our seniors (SOS) program. Both have been a success; the board will continue to strive under the goal of fighting old-age poverty, with the backing of many dedicated donors.

- 3.2.2 The board launched a major worldwide appeal to raise \$100,000 to fight old-age poverty in our communities (June 29 – July 16, 2006). The funds raised will provide destitute seniors access to basic essentials such as:
- Warm blankets & clothing
 - Balanced & healthy meals
 - Clean water
 - Safe & secure living environments
 - Access to medical care
 - Built-in fireplaces.



3.3 Program for Africa

For the next term, the board plans to work through Africa federation to meet the needs of senior citizens in Africa. In Africa, SAB and hopes to:

- Facilitate the creation of seniors bodies in the various local jamaats
- Create initiatives to meet the needs of our elders
- Expand our existing programs into Africa

3.4 Program for Asia

The board plans, with the co-operation of council of Gujarat and other regional bodies to strengthen the al qa'im sponsor our seniors (SOS) program and the hadith-e-kisa blanket drive in the India, Pakistan and Iraq. The focus on the next 3 years will be to expand these 2 programs:

- Project hope & save aims at eradicating poverty among the elderly
- Funds collected through this campaign will support our elders in the SOS, program, the hadith-e-kisa blanket drive and other strategies aimed at reducing poverty.

3.5 Program For North America

For the next term, the board plans to strengthen its ties with NASIMCO. We will explore the possibility of building seniors housing in North America in partnership with NASIMCO. The board will also work closely with NASIMCO to facilitate the creation of senior bodies in jamaats across the USA and Canada.

3.6 Program For Europe

For the next term, the board plans to continue to strengthen its ties with CoEJ. We will work with the CoEJ seniors network desk to facilitate initiatives that will address the issues of seniors in Europe. The board will explore the possibility of building seniors housing in Europe in partnership with CoEJ.

3.7 Partnering with MAB

Despite the collective best-efforts of this board and MAB, there still remains much work in the areas of medical screening, flu vaccinations and Islamic medical ethics for the aged. We will encourage greater screening, greater uptake of influenza vaccinations and work toward displaying relevant medical rulings online.



3.8 Healthy Aging Through Healthy Living Program

This new initiative is aimed at helping seniors to identify different ways to promote, support and enable healthy aging. This program will focus on:

- Health eating
- Injury prevention
- Tobacco use
- Physical exercise
- Social connectivity

3.9 Turabi Legacy Project

To preserve the legacy of Allama Rashid Turabi's majalises, the board will create a cd of his lectures and at the same time, launch one majalis a month to be featured on the world federation website.

3.10 Seniors' Internet Education Course

The board hopes to organize a mini course based on a recently developed internet education curriculum. This pilot project will be launched in 4 cities – London, Karachi, Toronto and Vancouver. The plan will be executed by the regional bodies and co-ordinated by the seniors advisory board of the world federation.

3.11 Inheritance And Estate Advice

The board will, in association with the regional bodies, develop an information package for seniors which will inform the community on local estate law with specific material on the twin concepts of wills and estate planning.



Summary of the Activities of the Seniors Advisory Board; 2003-2006

