



Muballigheen Training Programme (MTP)

Presented to
The Tenth Ordinary Conference
Dubai, 15-17 September 2006



THE
WORLD
FEDERATION

OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Registered charity in the UK No. 282303



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PREAMBLE

The World Federation Strategic Plan (2003) directed the Islamic Education Board to work towards making the Dhakireen and Ulema more effective at providing Islamic guidance to the community.

Subsequently, the Islamic Education Board facilitated a Weekend Retreat (2005) held in London, to seek input for Muballigheen and Ulema to formulate an action plan to enhance the level of Islamic Guidance.

This paper presents a summary of a comprehensive Programme for implementing a 10 year plan for the training of Muballigheen, who will be able to effectively serve the needs of the Community.



1 RECOMMENDATIONS

After consultation with Worldwide Community Elders, Leaders, Members (Male and Female), especially the youth, Resident Aalims, Scholars and Muballigheen, and having visited Howzas in England, India, Iran, Pakistan and Syria, WF proposes that:

- 1.1 From September 2007, a Muballigheen Training Programme be conducted under Hawza-e-Zainabiya in Damascus, with an intake of 15 students per year.
- 1.2 Each Jamaat to recommend at least one Muballigh Trainee from within its community. Preference to be given to those who are:
 - Under 30 Years of Age
 - Married
 - Graduate with a 4-year Degree (min 2:1)
 - With proven youth interaction
- 1.3 Each Training Course to run for four years, and the curriculum to be tailor-made to meet the needs of our worldwide community, such that at the end of his training, the Muballigh returns to his home town, and is:
 - able to Handle the Mihrab
 - able to Handle the Mimbar
 - able to Perform Practical Religious Services
 - able to Relate to all Ages and Genders within the community
 - able to Contribute to Madressah / Community School
 - able to Initiate Interfaith and Intrafaith activities
 - Computer Literate
 - Exposed to Modern Lifestyle
 - Aware of Contemporary Issues
- 1.4 The Training Programme to include:
 - Modules of Western Academic subjects in 19 identified areas such as Islam in the West, Islamic Fundamentalism, Gender Issues in Islam, Introduction to Psychology, etc.
 - Competency training in 19 identified skills such as Media, Communication, Management, Leadership, Journalistic, I.T., Presentation, etc.
 - The writing of a Masters Level Dissertation.
- 1.5 A course for Aalimas, conducted co-educationally with the Muballigheen Trainees in Damascus, should be offered to single female High School Graduates (A-level+). This course to be optionally offered to the Muballigheen-to-be spouses.
- 1.6 A WF Monitoring Institute of Higher Islamic Learning be set up to enter into an agreement with Hawza-e-Zainabiya:
 - To provide lecturers whose output will be closely monitored by the World Federation,
 - To train the lecturers to teach a fixed four year curriculum that has been developed specifically for the World Federation,
 - To Conduct co-educational classes,
 - To Run classes for 1036 hours per annum.
- 1.7 Develop new institutions, or support existing Seminaries in East Africa, Gujarat, Pakistan and in the West, to gradually take over The Training Programme in the long term.



2 ACTION PLAN

2.1 September 2006

2.1.1 Muballigh Training Administrator (MTA)

- WF to finalise Job Spec for an MTA.

2.1.2 Hawza

- WF to continue discussions with Hawza-e-Zainabiya in Damascus for the delivery of the WF Muballigheen Training Programme.

2.1.3 Feasibility Study & Finances

- WF to finalise the feasibility of an accommodation complex in Damascus.
- WF to discuss with the community, the financing of the training scheme.
- WF to discuss with the regions the financial aspects of posting a Muballigh for 2/3 year period after completion of studies.

2.2 October / November 2006

- WF to follow-up on syllabus, head-hunting for administrator and consulting competent academics for the structure of the course.
- WF to finalise the administrative structure for the course.
- WF to consolidate finances, planning for accommodation complex etc.
- Planning for a mini-conference in Dallas, Texas for academics in January 2007.

2.3 December 2006

- Dr. Khandan of Imam Sadiq University, Tehran, to deliver the complete syllabus and structural plan to WF. By then WF should be in possession of 3 complete syllabi together with a designed administrative and academic structure for the course.
- WF to finalise the complete syllabus and structure plan of Academic subjects.
- Finalise arrangement for a mini-conference of academics in Dallas, Texas.

2.4 January 2007

- Mini-Conference in Dallas, Texas to chart out the Final Syllabus.
- External consultants to sign-off the administrative structure of the course including selection panel etc.

2.5 February 2007

- Consolidation of the course, finishing touches.
- Sign-off by Office Bearers.

2.6 March 2007

- Preparation of brochures, material etc for launch of course.

2.7 April 2007

- Muballigheen Training Programme to be launched globally with specific deadlines.

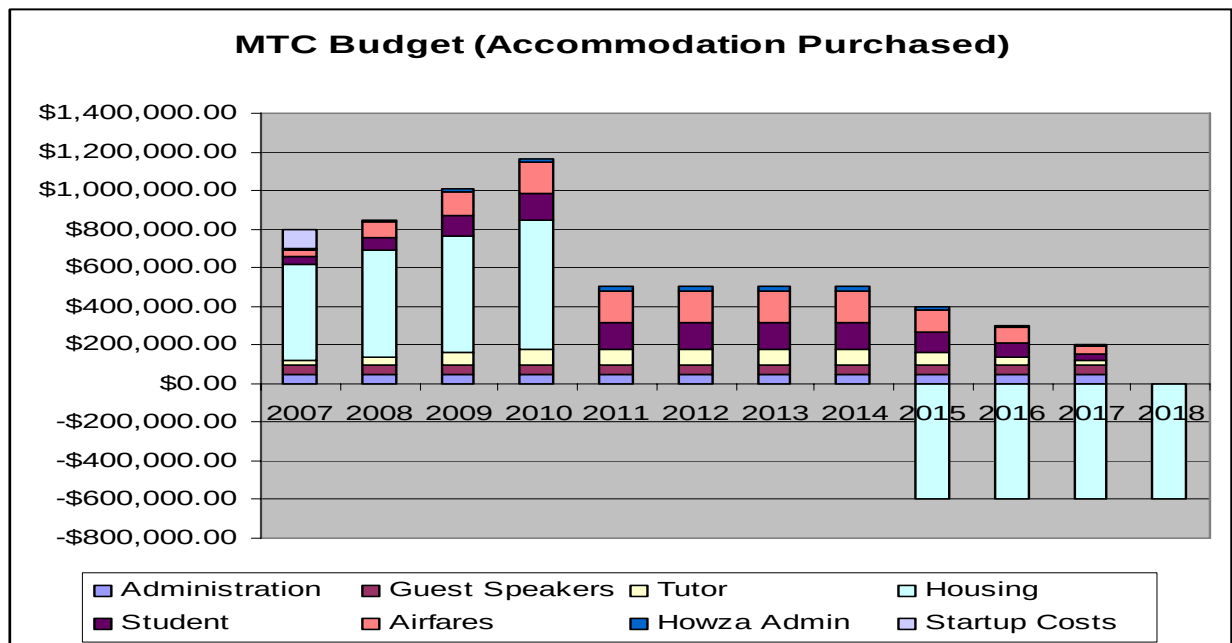
2.8 September 2007

- Course begins at Hawza-e-Zainabiya in Damascus.

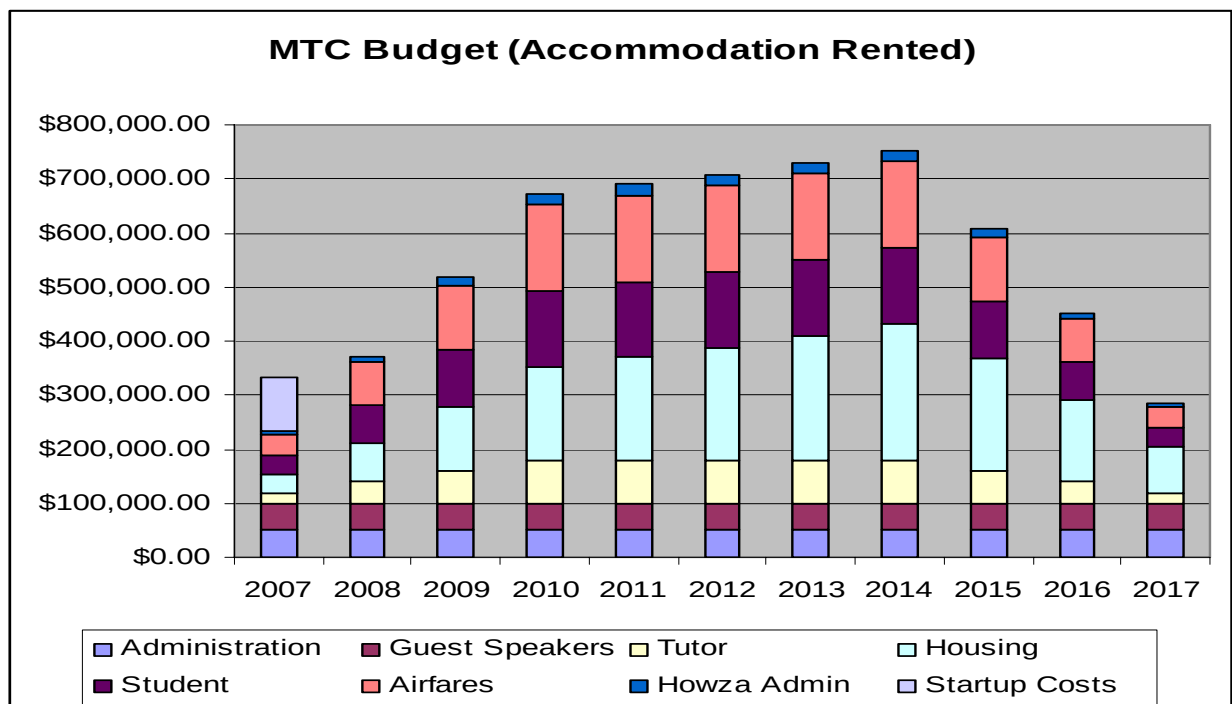


3 BUDGET

- 3.1 With purchase of accommodation, the total cost of training 120 Muballigheen over a 10-year period, is budgeted to cost US\$4,920,500.00 at an annual average of US\$492,050.00. This equates to just over \$40,000 per Muballigh.



- 3.2 With renting of accommodation, the total cost of training 120 Muballigheen over a 10-year period, is budgeted to cost US\$6,120,000.00 at an annual average of US\$612,000.00. This equates to just over \$50,000 per Muballigh.





4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The implementation of the 2003 World Federation Strategic Plan directed the Islamic Education Board to work towards making the Dhakireen and Ulema more effective at providing Islamic guidance to the community.
- 4.2 The Islamic Education Board formulated an action plan based on feedback received from the Muballigheen who participated in the 2005 Weekend Retreat held in London.
- 4.3 As a result, a full-time position of Muballigheen Training Coordinator (MTC) was created to undertake the following from January 2006 for a nine-month period:
- Clearly define and document core competencies of a Resident Aalim and Muballigh.
 - Clearly define and detail a syllabus for the entire course of Muballigheen Training Course with breakdown of targeted completion for each module.
 - Give clear proposals on a Muballigheen Training Course including breakdown by region, institutions offering the course, duration, costing, logistics and practicalities.
 - Give clear methodology of implementation of the course.
 - Give full detailed report of each institution visited together with full contact details of these, including personals.
- 4.4 This report summarises the main findings and recommendations of the MTC, Jaffer Dharamsi, as it relates to the responsibilities endowed to him by the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The report was a result of field research in the form of visiting communities and institutions (both religious and academic) in Canada, Dubai, East Africa, Europe, India, Iran, Madagascar, Pakistan, Syria and USA.
- 5.2 From January 2005 to August 2005, discussions were held with:
- 5.2.1 Syed Shahrestani, Representative of Ayatollah Seestani, Qum.
 - 5.2.2 Sheikh Haleem, Representative of Ayatollah Seestani, Damascus.
 - 5.2.3 Syed Baqir Kashmiri, Representative of Ayatollah Seestani in USA.
 - 5.2.4 Syed Jaffer Shirazi, Head of Hawza Zainabiya, Damascus.
 - 5.2.5 Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi, Head of Imam Khomeini Research Institute, Qum.
 - 5.2.6 Dr. Araffi, Head of International Center of Islamic Studies, Qum.
 - 5.2.7 Dr. Ali Asqer Khandan, curriculum specialist of Imam Sadiq (AS) University, Tehran.
 - 5.2.8 98 Jamaats were consulted.
 - 5.2.9 40 institutions for higher education were visited.
- 5.3 The consultation was done through written questionnaires, group workshops and one to one interviews.



6 THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS

What follows are the views of Worldwide Community Leaders, Members (Male and Female), especially the youth, Resident Aalims, Scholars and Community Muballigheen. Questionnaires were filled by community leaders and other groups.

6.1 The Muballigh:

- 6.1.1 He is one who has attended a Reliable Institution and received sound knowledge of at least Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Taarikh and Arabic from Qualified Tutors and has character in keeping with the teachings of The Ahlul Bayt (peace be on them) to act as a role model for the Community.

6.2 The Muballigh Requisites

- 6.2.1 Must have studied at well-known and credible places with a record of the lessons he has taken and his teachers. Someone who has just taught himself or has just studied with the western academics cannot be given the task unless he goes through a very accurate process of assessment by a select committee.
- 6.2.2 Capable to confidently lead congregational prayers, the daily, the Friday, the Eid, the Aayaat and for the Mayyit.
- 6.2.3 Capable to confidently recite a Majlis and to give a Khutbah in the language of the community.
- 6.2.4 Capable to confidently perform Practical Religious Services.
- 6.2.5 Capable to defend and to present favourably the beliefs of the followers of The Ahlul Bayt (peace be on them) amongst non practicing Shias, other Muslim denominations, non-Muslim believers and non-believers.
- 6.2.6 Thoroughly conversant with the Tauzi' of the major Maraje' and able to manage day to day fiqh questions.
- 6.2.7 Able to relate to all ages and genders within the community, recognising particular challenges facing each group.
- 6.2.8 Capable to confidently undertake the guidance of community institutions like children's Madressahs, community schools, youth camps, seminars etc.
- 6.2.9 Thoroughly understand all the implications of Marriage in Islam and the host community, be able to conduct pre-marriage seminars and be able to conduct the union.
- 6.2.10 Able to mediate equitably where there is a marriage breakdown, and as a last resort be able to dissolve the union.
- 6.2.11 Thoroughly understand all the implications of death and burial in Islam and in the host community, and be able to conduct the washing, shrouding and burying of the dead body.
- 6.2.12 Able to mediate equitably where there is dispute in matters of the will and inheritance of property of the deceased.
- 6.2.13 Able to maintain harmony in the community by being able to mediate equitably where there is a dispute amongst members of the community.
- 6.2.14 Must be Computer Literate.
- 6.2.15 Must be exposed to Modern Lifestyle.
- 6.2.16 Must be Aware of Contemporary Issues.



6.3 The Muballigh Pre-Requisites

- 6.3.2 The potential Muballigh must be recommended by at least two reliable sources who know him in person up to the date of recommendation. He should be recommended by community leaders or other reliable sources as a person with some of the following characteristics:
- 6.3.2 A god fearing person with a demonstrated commitment to Ilm and love for the Ahlul bait. (AS) with a personal commitment to Taqwa and Zuhd.
- 6.3.3 Has the love of the community.
- 6.3.4 Is accepted and respected by the community and the people who know him at work or where he has studied, that is, he has a clear history.
- 6.3.5 Responds to the youth with warmth and concern and must have proven youth interaction.
- 6.3.6 Is a good communicator.
- 6.3.7 Is married.
- 6.3.8 Must be a Graduate with a 4-year Degree (min 2:1).
- 6.3.9 Is warm and caring.
- 6.3.10 Is humble.
- 6.3.11 Has a positive view of self – aware of personal strengths and areas for development.
- 6.3.12 Is capable of positive handling of personal problems.
- 6.3.13 Has an ongoing commitment to professional, theological and personal development.
- 6.3.14 Has a positive view of people – believing in their ability to change.
- 6.3.15 Has a love of people and a willingness to nurture to their spiritual needs.
- 6.3.16 Is eager to facilitate the spiritual development of the community.
- 6.3.17 Sincerely believes in merja'iyya and has a good relation with Howzas.
- 6.3.18 Is committed to the unity of the community and is against sectarian tendencies.

6.4 The Muballigh Training Course – Expectations

- 6.4.1 *Language* - The Intended Aalim should be taught Arabic first, then any other languages. Courses to be tailor-made to account for expected Tabligh dates, Hawza studies, etc.
- 6.4.1.1 Arabic - It is important that the Aalim should have a total command of Arabic (i.e. speaking, writing, grammar, Tajweed, etc). This will be useful for: teaching the community, Tabligh outside the community (esp. Africa), explaining the Qur'an and Hadith, etc.
- 6.4.1.2 English - Total command as most of our communities use it as first or second language, it is the language of the youth and is essential for Tabligh outside the community. For those who do not know English send to the local British Council to learn English.



- 6.4.1.3 Gujarati - Good Speaking Power, needed to get to the elders and to preserve the culture (very important).
- 6.4.1.4 National Language - (e.g. Kiswahili in East Africa, French in Madagascar, Urdu in Pakistan etc). Someone who comes from Paris goes back to Paris – so no need to learn French.
- 6.4.2 *Oratory* - Must be trained to have excellent oratory power. Courses should take into account requirements for Majalis and lectures (with and without use of PowerPoint presentation).
- 6.4.3 *Study of Logic* - Hawza teaches subjects that are logically explained. Logic (Mantiq) is also taught as a subject. Both aspects should be used to bring logic into lectures/Majalis/youth sessions as a way of entering into the minds of the youth. All Islamic issues should sound logical. This especially applies to Usool-e-deen.
- 6.4.4 *Sports* - This is part of the modern Hawza syllabus, but not taken seriously. A MUST for all intended Aalims if they are to interact with the youth. Must instill this requirement in all Muballigheen-to-be, with careful planning of approach.
- 6.4.5 *Conversant with the Youth* - The Muballigh should be aware of the challenges faced by the youth from before. All Muballigheen-to-be should be made aware of this so that there is a constant search for appropriate solutions.
- 6.4.6 *Current Affairs* - Being aware of what is taking place around us and analyzing the causes, must be taught. Sessions should be created to discuss world events on a weekly basis.
- 6.4.7 *Command of all major Islamic Subjects* - Not all Howzas teach all the subjects. There must be an attempt to learn all the subjects that are of importance to the community.
- 6.4.8 *Akhlaq* - In addition to being taught as a theoretical subject to encourage the development of Inner Akhlaq (e.g. freedom from Ujb, Takabbur; assimilation of Sabr, Shukr, etc) and Outer Akhlaq (that is what the people see in you) which is the result of Inner purification.
- 6.4.9 *Internet, Email and Microsoft Office* - A Muballigh-to-be should be computer literate so that he can serve the community with the best tools. This should be taught properly. Loan/Gift to purchase a laptop should be considered.
- 6.4.10 *Interfaith and Intrafaith Training* - To learn, to create and to maintain a vibrant, interfaith community that embraces diversity and empowers the receiving of and expression of gifts in a spiritual community that draws on spiritual practices, knowledge and truths of all traditions to inspire peace in their extended communities and amongst all people.
- 6.4.11 *Wider Literary Knowledge* - Without doubt, books bring untold beneficial experiences into our lives. The right books will give an understanding of the thinking of the extended community and an appreciation of the thinking of the wider society. The Muballigh-to-be should be asked to read at least 40 recommended Western Authored Books during the four year training period.
- 6.4.12 *Summer Break* - Muballigheen-to-be whilst under training must be sent back to their hometown for at least 2 Months every Year to keep in touch with their community and with new developments in Technology etc.



6.5 THE MUBALLIGH TRAINING COURSE VENUE

- 6.5.1 Ideal: Najaf (When Security Stabilizes)
- 6.5.2 Meantime: Damascus
- 6.5.3 Long Term: Develop or support existing Seminaries in Pakistan, East Africa, Gujarat and the West, to gradually take over the training Programme.

6.6 THE MUBALLIGH TRAINING COURSE DURATION

- 6.6.1 Not more than FOUR Years.

6.7 THE ROLE OF AALIMAS AND DHAKIRAS:

RECOGNISE THE NEED:

- 6.7.1 For encouraging and Sponsoring Young Ladies to acquire Further Islamic Education.
- 6.7.2 For continued guidance for Ladies by Ladies.
- 6.7.3 For Aalimas to do Tabligh within their own Communities.

6.8 COURSE FOR AALIMAS (OPTIONAL FOR MUBALLIGHEEN SPOUSES)

- 6.8.1 The same Programme to be made available to Single High School Graduates (A-level+) wishing to acquire Further Islamic Education.
- 6.8.2 Similar to The Muballigheen Training Course.
- 6.8.3 In the main part to be conducted co-educationally with the Muballigheen in Damascus.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The Islamic Education Board of The World Federation would like to acknowledge all the office bearers, members (Male and Female), especially the Youth, Resident Aalims, Scholars and Community Muballigheen of all the Jamaats and Regional Federations for their input towards this report. Our sincere appreciation to the following individuals who worked tirelessly in providing input towards this report:

- Sayyid Moustafa Qazwini, Los Angeles, USA.
- Dr. Mohammad S. Bahmanpour, London, England.
- Dr. Mohammad A Shomali, Qum, Iran.
- Syed Mohammad Rizvi, Toronto, Canada.
- Dr. Liyakatali Takim, Denver, USA.
- Dr. Hamid Mavani, Los Angeles, USA.
- Dr. Mohsin Alidina, New York, USA.
- Sheikh Arif Abdul Hussein, Birmingham, England.
- Sheikh Safdar Razi, Austin, USA.
- Sheikh Muhammad Khalfan, Antananarivo, Madagascar.