



Islamic Education Board (IEB)

Report for the Term 2003 – 2006

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**THE
WORLD
FEDERATION**

OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report will focus on the activities of the Islamic Education Board during the term 2003 – 2006.
- 1.2 The Board is divided into 4 departments:
- External Tableegh
 - Internal Tableegh
 - Publications
 - Islamic Religious Education (separate report)

2 DISCUSSION

2.1 External Tableegh

2.1.1 *Bosnia*

The Bosnian Desk is now established within Bosnia, and the team aims to facilitate the expansion of a local Shia community.

- 2.1.1.1 The Bosnian language magazine “Muslimanski Zivot” (www.muslimanskizivot.com) is now established and is published on a quarterly basis. The magazine has regular articles on Islamic history, laws, tafseer and current affairs. Each quarter: 1500 copies are printed and distributed in 25 different countries.

- 2.1.1.2 Work on the Community Complex project for the Shia community in Ljeshevo has started. The plot had been purchased and designs have been prepared for the Mosque, the Imambara and 16 family homes.

- 2.1.1.3 Other efforts in Bosnia include the establishment of an internet forum to answer questions on Shia Islam. We have also catalysed the growth of the ‘Taha’ Bosnian Shia Community. Lectures have been given at Sarajevo Husainiyyah to cover a range of topics and a Children’s Madrasah has been set up which now runs weekly.

2.1.2 *United Kingdom*

- 2.1.2.1 Radio Programmes in the UK were initiated in September 1999. In June 2005 airtime was purchased directly from Spectrum Radio and on June 18th 2005, Radio Fatima began. It broadcasts for one hour everyday.

- 2.1.2.2 The Radio Fatima website (www.radiofatima.com) was launched in September 2005. The Radio programmes cover a wealth of subjects including Nahjul Balagha, and Islamic Family Structure. So far 5 people have converted since June 2005.

- 2.1.2.3 The Board has built fulfilling, fruitful relationships worldwide under the noble banner of interfaith relations. The Board has published its first ever interfaith publication, ‘Jesus on Ethics’. Over 6000



copies have been distributed. It was also sent to major Christian groups and UK Members of Parliament.

- 2.1.2.4 In December 2004, during Christmas, the Board distributed educational books to various Universities, Christian groups and media organisations. The work culminated in the visit from a representative of the Catholic Bishops Conference to Dar Al Tableegh, London.
- 2.1.2.5 In response to the growing calls for a united Shia stance on various United Kingdom government policies, IEB has taken a stance to form a United Shia Council of scholars from around 50 leading organisations.
- 2.1.2.6 The Board provides guidance to both Member and Non-Member Organisations for joint Tableegh initiatives. This includes regular assistance in the recruitment and selection of Ulama including for the Holy Months of Ramadhan and Muharram.
- 2.1.2.7 A delegation visited scholars serving Non-Member Organisations in the UK in order to assess their needs.
- 2.1.2.8 Shia Student Organisations in the UK and Canada have been provided with books for free which have consequently been distributed in various Universities.
- 2.1.3 *Belgium*

The Board attended the First World Congress of Islamic Scholars and Rabbis in Belgium (January 2005). The conference was titled, 'Imams and Rabbis for Peace.' The Board attended the follow up meeting in Seville (March 2006.) A key feature of the Congress were the youth sessions that were organised directly by the Board.
- 2.1.4 *USA*

In Ramadhan 1426, IEB facilitated the distribution of the Interfaith resource titled 'Subahnallah – Miracles of the Holy Quran'. This PowerPoint presentation on the miracles of the Quran was designed by the Hussein Youth of Los Angeles.
- 2.1.5 *East Africa*

At the Muballigheen Retreat, the Board established a task force in East Africa to aid their ongoing Tableegh efforts.

 - 2.1.5.1 There are two aims of the project:
 - Empowerment through educational development.
 - Economic emancipation amongst indigenous Africans.
 - 2.1.5.2 The workshop created a consensus within all Tableeghi Organisations in Africa to increase mutual co-ordination. It was decided that a Task Force would:
 - Analyse current work
 - Submit proposals of how economic emancipation of the locals can be ensured



- Undertake a study of education structures and submit proposals for development
- Produce a 3-year Action Plan to incorporate the proposals for the renovation of the centres, schools and madaris.

2.1.5.3 The work has commenced, an office has been established and planning completed. The Task Force is assessing the situation within Tanzania.

2.1.5.4 IEB has pledged to East African Tableeghi Institutions regular consignments of literature 3 times a year to coincide with major calendar events. To date, more than 10,000 books have been sent to over 40 organisations in East Africa.

2.1.5.5 A comprehensive proposal was received from the TTF on 3 key areas:

- E-Learning Programme,
- Short Educational Courses
- Writing Original Islamic Texts.

A tender has been received for E Learning and work will commence in the next term.

2.1.6 *Asia*

The Board is committed to delivering Tableegh to the Blind. Copies of the Holy Qur'an in Braille were sent to a School for the Blind in Calcutta and the Board has facilitated copies of various books to be converted into Braille. These books were introduced into libraries in Pakistan and to institutions for the Blind in the UK.

2.1.6.1 The Board has financed Madaris in Pakistan to combat the influence of Wahhabism. IEB has entrusted the preparation of Islamic Education in Urdu to a local Tableegh organisation. The project is in a preliminary stage and will be evaluated based on feedback from schools.

2.1.6.2 10,000 copies of "Paygham-e-Najat" in Sindi distributed.

2.1.6.3 The first 2 of 12 volumes by Maulana Mir Hamid Hussain, authored in the 1950's, has been translated and circulated throughout Indian Subcontinent.

2.2 **Other Work**

Spanish Shia converts through the support of The Board have established a community together with a Madrasah. They secured the services of a full-time qualified Spanish Alim who has graduated from Qum.

2.2.1 The aim of the Quran Resource Portal is to provide a Qur'an research base online. This website complements the Qur'an Library and Research Centre at the Dar al Tableegh. Since inception, the website has been consistently updated encouraging regular visitors



to the site. During the 1st week of Mahe Ramadhan 1426 the weekly count was 10,432.

2.3 Internal Tableegh

2.3.1 Iran

The Board established an office in Qum in September 2004.

- 2.3.1.1 A key function of the Qum Office is relationship with the offices of the various Maraje.
- 2.3.1.2 The annual Madinah al-Ilm Short Courses focus on academic excellence in an Islamic environment, as well as promoting cultural activities. The course is aimed at youths from 18 to 24 years. It is extensively subsidised by the IEB; and the Regional Federations are encouraged to offer further subsidies. In 2005, students came from North America, Dubai, Africa and Europe. The second annual course fully sponsored indigenous African students.
- 2.3.1.2 Baab ul Ilm Summer Camps are designed for students between 14-17 years and include the same high standards and overall format of Madinah al-Ilm Course.
- 2.3.1.3 The Qum Office has initiated research projects. The first article, 'Identifying the Most Learned and the Issue of Partial Taqlid' has been distributed to Zakireen, and is available on the IEB Portal. Three more articles are expected towards the end of 2006.
- 2.3.1.4 During Muharram 1426, the Qum Office facilitated lectures on Ziyarat e Ashura. The work is an original piece of research done by a Khoja Hawza student. These lectures are available online and a booklet is planned.
- 2.3.1.5 The Qum Office, together with the Porch of Wisdom Institute, initiated the translation of a range of challenging Q & A's. The completed 50 Q & A's are online and a book of the entire questions and answers is planned for release. The Board also embarked upon Q & A project on Fiqh, designed to allow community members to ask Jurisprudential questions with rapid responses from the office of Ayatullah Seestani in Qum.
- 2.3.1.6 The Qum Office has arranged a host of training workshops:
 - Teaching techniques & presentation skills
 - Moon Sighting
 - Arabic Language Skills (for female students)
 - Enhanced Farsi Language Skills (for mothers and selected girls)
 - English Language Skills (for selected male students)
 - Weekly Speech Programmes
 - Workshop on 'The Methods of Explaining Ahkam' to improve communication of Muballigheen
- 2.3.1.7 The Qum Office will establish the first English learning resource Library for students. In June 2005, the Qum Office also produced a CD on information relating to learning Arabic in Syria.



- 2.3.1.8 The relationships established by the Qum Office has enabled them to recommend 18 students to Hawza.
'<http://qum.jot.com/WikiHome>' is a good resource.
- 2.3.1.9 The Qum office has established a vibrant community atmosphere, which can be seen in the following ways:
- 2 student email groups have been setup – one male (76 members) and one female (33 members).
 - Functions are held on major Islamic calendar events, including the 12 nights of Muharram 1426 and 1427.
 - Help with housing costs: a 4 stage plan has been implemented to assist students with accommodation.
 - Cooperation with Jamia al-Zahra, which accepts recommended students and partners the Qum Office in short courses.
 - Relations with the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, who assist with training courses.
 - Imam Sadiq (as) Education and Research Institute assists with high level short courses for Muballigheen.
- 2.3.2 *Muballigheen Retreat*
- In October 2005, the Board received 50 scholars and community workers in the field of Tableegh at a weekend retreat in London. The aim of this retreat was to seek the input of the Muballigheen into the vision of the Board's Tableegh work.
- 2.3.2.1 A total of nine papers under the themes of 'Practical Realities faced by Muballigheen', 'Muballigheen Training' and 'Community Burning Issues', were debated. The result of these discussions is an action plan:
- Tableegh in North America by the Tableegh Task Force (TTF) is to be implemented.
 - An 'Africa Task Force' to be set up to ensure economic emancipation and empowerment.
 - Working paper to address issues related to the profession of resident Alims.
 - Syllabus structure to ensure the competency of future Alims
 - Continuous personal development of existing Muballigheen through various training.
 - Clear guidelines on mixed gatherings for adoption throughout the community.
- 2.3.2.2 The action plan is coming into fruition: the TTF tenders have been received and the work has been commissioned; the Africa Task Force together with its office has been established; a Muballigh Training Coordinator has been appointed and has completed his research and the Resident Alim Working Paper is complete and will compliment the findings of the Muballigheen Training Coordinator.
- 2.3.2.3 In addition, a Board of Experts has been appointed, including Hawza graduates and academics, to suggest improvements to the Muballigheen Training Coordinator. The institutions specialising in long term academic courses of alims are in receipt of support from IEB and students are sponsored at these institutions.



- 2.3.2.4 Mixed-gathering guidelines were adopted at the Executive Council meeting in Dar es Salaam on February 18th 2006.
- 2.3.2.5 The Continuous Personal Development programme will:
- Conduct a three-module training programme designed for the UK due to the prominent concentration of Mubaligheen based there. The topics include media training, Quranic sciences, and public speaking.
 - Create a content-based intensive training course to be implemented within the Hawza of Qum.
- 2.3.3 *Other Activities*
- Ulama are increasingly being included in the activities of IEB; with the facilitation (alongside CoEJ) annual Zakireen Seminar, and assistance given in finding Resident Alims and Zakireen, with a Zakireen directory planned for the Board's website.
- 2.3.3.1 In September 2005, the Board established a Media Department and appointed a full time expert. Key achievements include:
- Regular programmes in the UK in Ramadhan and Muharram via television & radio.
 - Training workshops on how to present on the television & radio.
 - The Media Library has been relocated at Dar al Tableegh. The Library will open to the public through the website
 - The Board digitalised audio lectures by Marhum Mulla Asghar onto CD; published. The topics chosen were 'Imamat' and 'Tawheed.'
- 2.3.3.2 The moon-sighting issue has affected the community. The Board has been firm in adhering to the established religious rulings by our Marja, in accordance with his Fatwas. In October 2004 the Board held a seminar to discuss the moon-sighting issue. It included a discussion on the rulings of Ayatullah Seestani and answers from his offices, as well as a debate on the related astronomical data. This resulted in the formation of a Hilal Committee.
- 2.3.3.3 A year after the formation of the Hilal Committee, a follow up seminar was arranged and attended by resident Alims and astronomical experts. The seminar was also attended by the head of the questions section of the office of Ayatullah Seestani in Qum. The seminar presented both astronomical and Shariat perspectives on the Hilal issue, followed by an in-depth Q&A session. It was agreed that the Hilal Committee will be the final source of information and guidance for the World Federation on a monthly basis.
- 2.3.3.4 Following the formation of the Hilal Committee, the Board issues two statements every month. The first statement guides the community on the expected moon sightings based on astronomical calculations, with the second statement issued after diligent investigation into sighting reports; confirming the moon-sighting.



- 2.3.3.5 The Board formed the Media Monitoring Group (MMG) to examine various media output. The MMG's principle is to appreciate journalism and respond to negatively-toned or informed pieces by portraying the correct information; in accordance with our guiding principles.
- 2.3.3.6 The Board has established its own website, specifically related to Islamic education, with book reviews, downloads, resources and a links database. In August 2005 the IEB Portal received 10,700 hits in a day.
- 2.3.3.7 The Board provides monthly Alim grants & seasonal grants during Muharram and Ramadhan to a range of member and non-member organisations, and has introduced a system of greater accountability.

2.4 Islamic Religious Education (Separate Report)

2.5 GCSE Islamic Studies

The Board has aimed to introduce GCSE Islamic Studies into the Madaris curriculum, and held Seminars in May and December 2004, in order to support teachers in delivering the GCSE syllabus.

- 2.5.1 The Board held annual Inset Training Day for GCSE teachers, conducted in April 2005 and January 2006, with the Chief Examiner of Edexcel Islamic Studies. A similar workshop was held in Mombassa in May 2005, conducted by a member of the IEB GCSE Team. Participants attended from across East Africa and Pakistan.
- 2.5.2 The Board formed a committee to oversee the development of GCSE and to create notes that Madaris can use. The notes are complete and will be made available for September 2006.
- 2.5.3 The Board has made efforts to build networks with the examining body, leading to discussions on a separate Shia based notes, registration of Dar al Tableegh as an examination centre, facilitation of exam papers completed by Shia students to be centralised via Dar al Tableegh, admission of one recommended IEB Team member onto the Examination Panel, consultation with IEB for changes to the syllabus in 2006. In addition, two members of the IEB Edexcel Committee have successfully applied to the positions of examiner and assistant examiner.

2.6 Assistance to Madaris

The Board has served Madaris globally, including:

- Quranic Software CD, 'Saba', gift to all families with children in UK Jamaats and Madaris.



- 2 DVDs on the lives of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Prophet Musa gift to all UK Madaris.
- 'Understanding Salaat' Resource book provided to all UK Madaris.

2.6.1 The Board, in collaboration with the Madrasah Teacher Training Institute (MTTI) in Toronto, completed the first ever training of Madrasah Teachers online via video streaming. The 20 sessions cover training on Teaching Strategies, Media, History, Arabic, Mind Mapping, Memorisation, Duas and more topics.

2.6.2 To promote a culture of reading within our youth, The Board produced a Recommended Reading List with recommended titles for each age group.

2.6.3 MNET is an online forum for teachers to share ideas. The MNET project is hosted by IEB and selected MNET material is provided on the Portal.

2.7 Publications

To further our aims in this vital department, the Board has appointed a full time publications director, and set up an Editorial Advisory Committee to oversee future publications.

2.7.1 A total of 23 books were released this term on a plethora of topics.



3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Many of the projects are ongoing and will carry over into the new term. The Islamic Education Board will need to build capacity globally towards gradually empowering our Muballigheen and volunteers in regions and Jamaats to serve the Tableegh cause.

This will allow the World Federation to optimally use its central resources for providing guidance, direction and strategies rather than concentrate on execution. If this were to be endorsed by Conference, then the very structure of IEB as a board will need to be reshaped and the modus operandi will need to be tailored accordingly.

- 3.2 Implement the Muballigh Training Programme (MTP); leading to the creation a Centre of Excellence for Muballigheen Training. Through the MTP, we will empower approximately 100 Muballigheen over the next decade from within the community. The benchmark of success would be the presence of a Resident Alim in every Jamaat
- 3.3 Realisation of a self-sufficient publishing house
- 3.4 Creation of a central support structure within African Tableeghi Organisations, run by indigenous Africans
- 3.5 Training of key individuals in Bosnia in both Islamic and secular knowledge so as to become self-sufficient
- 3.6 Replication of the Radio Fatima model across the world
- 3.7 Build on networks established for a comprehensive Tableegh plan for the blind.
- 3.8 Hold annual Zakireen retreats to evaluate and review the Board's Action Plans
- 3.9 Establish Continuous Personal Development programmes as a norm.
- 3.10 Enable the introduction of GCSE (or equivalent) in Madaris worldwide

Summary of the Activities of the Islamic Education Board; 2003-2006

