



Islamic Education

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THE
WORLD
FEDERATION

OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report will focus on the activities of the Islamic Education department as per the 13 objectives that were highlighted by the Executive Council in October 2007 at Leicester for the term 2006 – 2009. The report also covers a number of objectives and projects that have been inherited from Conference 2000 and the document 'Vision to Reality' of 2001, in addition to objectives of the Strategic Plan of 2003.
- 1.2 The resolution of Conference 2006 has resulted in the creation of a department for Islamic Education rather than the former structure as a Board. The role of chairman has been replaced by an 'Assistant Secretary General'.
- 1.2 The department is divided into 4 sections:
 1. External Tableegh
 2. Internal Tableegh
 3. Islamic Religious Education
 4. Publications

2.0 Discussion

External Tableegh

2.1 Bosnia – Key Achievements

The Bosnian Desk, now firmly established within Bosnia around a Shia community, is being strengthened with a number of different projects and initiatives to both support the Shia community and to help spread the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (as) to the wider Bosnian Society.

- 2.1.1 The community organises regular functions where a large number of non Shias attend.
- 2.1.2 The community has established a weekend madrasah for community children.
- 2.1.3 The Bosnian language magazine "Muslimanski Zivot" (www.muslimanskizivot.com) 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.
- 2.1.4 The work on housing for the community's families has been enhanced and is being further developed. A total of 16 houses are being built.
- 2.1.5 The community's adults are given the opportunity to enhance their Islamic education through classes on Akhlaq, Fiqh, and Aqaid, offered by former graduates of Hawza Ilmiyya Qum.
- 2.1.6 The Desk runs an Islamic radio programme every week at a peak time in the evenings. This programme has the potential to reach 1 million people and has just started its second year of broadcasts. Already, other radio stations have requested cooperation and material from the Desk.



- 2.1.7 A number of key Shia publications have been selected for translation and once completed will be distributed throughout Bosnia.
- 2.1.8 The Desk has facilitated the sponsorship of 7 students in secular education for 6 months of their school fees.
- 2.1.9 Two students of the Shia community were fully sponsored to attend the Madinah and Bab summer courses in Qum in 2008.
- 2.2 Spain and South America
- 2.2.1 The World Federation has established contact with Shias in Spain for the last few years and provided support for the purposes of a madrasah. Along with this a Spanish Shia scholar was tasked with the translation of the Qur'an.
- 2.2.2 Having built this link with Spanish speaking Shias, The World Federation requested them to help to gather data of other Spanish speaking converts. Contact was established with over 200 converts to Shia Islam from the Spanish speaking world, including South America. Copies of this Qur'an were then dispatched to these 200 individuals as a gift. Whilst showing our support to new converts to our faith, this gift also enabled The World Federation to build networks and gain information on the Tableegh opportunities that exist in this vast region. Requests for more Qur'ans and books in Spanish have been received.
- 2.2.3 A flavour of the feedback received is provided below:

From Peru:

"I want to thank Allah and you for the beautiful Qur'an that I have received today ... My compromise with Allah is stronger day by day and Inshallah with your help and with your assistance to be able to learn more ... Brothers of THE WORLD FEDERATION OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES, I would like some brothers and sisters to come to Peru to make da'wa and that we would be able to open a mosque for the pleasure of Allah and that the brothers that become Muslims have a place where they can go for our religious identity to become strong. We need your help."

From Chile:

"... happy with my new Qur'an that I received yesterday, and to you many thanks for your support. Here in Iquique there is a lot of interest for Islam, but there is just a big mosque built 10 years ago by the Sunni Hanafi. We don't have a mosque but the strong point of the Shia school is the big effort to get books and studying material. In the mosque there are no books in Spanish, and if there are they are not accessible or are of a very bad quality. Any help that you can provide will be very important ..."

From Brazil:

"With immense happiness I have received the Qur'an you sent me ... I would like to do any volunteer work for any of your projects and services. If it is possible please send us more books in Spanish for our community here in Brazil, we need lots of books."



2.3 India

- 2.3.1 A total of 50,000 booklets on Muharram and the true meaning of Jihad were sponsored, printed and distributed throughout Mumbai in cooperation with World Islamic Network.

"We are grateful to The World Federation and other Mu'mineen for donating to this cause. The leaflets and booklets made a tremendous impact on our tableegh work and were valued by all." Zaheer Abbas Merchant of WIN.

- 2.3.2 1000 copies of an introductory book on Shia Islam authored by Allamah Tabataba'i was sponsored for free distribution in cooperation with World Islamic Network.
- 2.3.3 Financial support was provided to a Hawza in Sittapur, Uttra Pradesh, where 153 students study a five year Hawza course and then graduate to support the activities of the sizeable Shia community in that region.

2.4 Sindh

Building on past achievements in Sindh, The World Federation has mobilised funds for the reprinting of the excellent 'Payam e Najaat' in the Sindhi language.

2.4 Africa

- 2.4.1 Every year a handful of Bilal Muslim Mission selected individuals are fully sponsored to attend the Madinah and Bab summer courses.

"... The entire trip led to a massive conversion of my spirituality. I realised that my spirituality needed a long work of adjustment so that I can be close to Allah. The recitation of Dua-e-Tawasul and Kumayl among others really encouraged me to seek Allah's pleasure through these Duas by reciting them in tears for the fear of Allah and asking for his Favours." Comment by Abdallah Machi, Bilal student after 2008 Madinah summer course.

- 2.4.2 10,000 copies of the publication 'Juz Amma' in Swahili has been sponsored and will cover a Swahili translation and Shia commentary of the 30th chapter of the Qur'an.
- 2.4.3 Africa Task Force (ATF) has been fully supported. 2 key meetings were held that agreed to:
- A. Increase BLESS scholarships and open the application process to other institutions
 - B. Increase ZCSS scholarships to a host of institutions
 - C. Facilitate and increase communication between organisations
 - D. Include institutions and their achievements in WF INFOCUS magazine
 - E. Muballigheen exchanges to be encouraged
 - F. Overall sharing of experience, opportunities and best practices to increase
- 2.4.4 9000 publications were provided and subsequently distributed to institutions in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa.



"The books that are sent by Islamic Education have given us a wonderful opportunity to educate the public in this region. Free books on Islam, especially regarding the Ahlul Bayt (as), are vital to our Tableegh work. The books are distributed to almost 50 centres throughout East and Southern Africa. The recipients are very grateful to have received these resources. These publications help to educate and inspire teachers, Muballigheen, and members of the public. They are also kept in the local libraries. This has gradually helped to change the perception of Islam amongst people. I recall once a lady came to our bookshop after reading 'Islam and Religious Pluralism' by Shaheed Mutaahhari; she said she now realised Islam was not the confined religion she once thought it was, but rather it invites all people and frees the thought process of individuals to equip themselves towards better society. Islamic literature covers vast area of social with spiritual development. Islamic Education of WF must increase the printing of publications and continue this excellent service to Africa." Mehboob Somji, chairman of Dar es Salaam's Tabligh Sub-Committee.

2.5 Sri Lanka

A student from the Zahra Association of Sri Lanka was fully sponsored to attend the 2008 Madinah short course:

This camp was a life changing experience for me, mainly due to the spiritual closeness I gained from this trip ... The first day that we went to the Zari of Bibi Masumeh for Fajr prayers was the first time that I experienced this wonderful feeling of spirituality, the feeling of being in a holy place among holy personalities ... This camp helped me to gain spiritual closeness and, therefore, enabled me to become a better Muslim ... It is important for us to know how to handle ourselves and act as examples to others, and this camp gave us the knowledge on how to be a shining example and also adapt to any situation. I needed to be strong and this trip gave me that strength and taught me many things which practically changed my life to a great extent." Comment by Mohamed Ashroff Jalill, after 2008 Madinah summer course.

2.6 Canada

A conference for reverts to Shia Islam was sponsored and further cooperation has been discussed.

"To look around the room and see the many faces from various backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures was inspiring and moving ... This was all possible due to the generous support given by The World Federation and NASIMCO, which provided a lot of the event's budget." Jennah Heydari, leader of the Revert Muslim Association.

"I appreciate the efforts of Islamic Education in supporting the revert's conference this year, which proved to be a successful event and discussed many important issues that were important for all Muslims. Sometimes it takes a revert's probing of spiritual issues to remind us how comprehensive a religion Islam is. I attended only one session on the concept of 'Asabiya' and I learned how Islam makes us conscious about supporting the truth as opposed to relationships, religion, cast, creed, nationality etc. I hope that Islamic Education will continue to support the deeper appreciation of Islam as well as revert groups." Sabi Ahsan, former councillor at NASIMCO.



2.7 United Kingdom

2.7.1 The Qur'an resource portal www.quran.org.uk is maintained and monitored. Email correspondence is provided and resources are sent to interested readers throughout the world. The site receives over 11000 visitors per month.

2.7.2 A chaplaincy awareness event was arranged where community Muballigheen were given an overview of chaplaincy within hospitals and queries were answered. As a result 2 Muballighs have been fully sponsored to complete their chaplaincy courses and are awaiting placements.

"This course has not only boosted my confidence but renewed my enthusiasm and zeal for continuing to deliver and spread the message of Ahlul Bayt (as) wherever I go. The course was very useful and informative and I would recommend my fellow brothers and sisters of our community to seize the opportunity of attending such courses. It provided insights into human nature and feelings at difficult times, for example when dealing with sick and terminally ill patients, dealing with relatives of patients and making people aware of Allah's mercy and to be in harmony within themselves. This course has enhanced and enlightened my knowledge even further and will help me carry out more efficiently the voluntary chaplaincy work I do at the Royal Infirmary Hospital and also at multi faith groups in Leicester." Mulla Mujtaba Musa of Leicester.

2.7.3 Shaykh Abbas Ismail has been appointed to the position of President with the Christian Muslim Forum. This opens further opportunities for participation and involvement within interfaith.

2.7.4 A total of 19,528 books were distributed free of charge throughout the world. These were sent to networks, converts, regional federations and Muballigheen. The cost of this distribution was approximately £49,500.

3.0 Internal Tableegh

3.1 Qum Office – Key Achievements

3.1.1 The number of community students in the seminary of Qum is steadily increasing. Currently there are over 110 Khoja students that are studying in Qum. The Office has successfully created a community atmosphere and sense of belonging to the students. Regular programmes are conducted as per the Islamic calendar where renowned scholars from within and outside the community are given the opportunity to educate and inspire the attendees. A key feature of the programmes is the high calibre of speakers that are invited.

"The sessions that we attended at Dar al-Zahra, being to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husein (AS) were very good and practical. The English lectures were amazing both for men as well as children. I found my child completely enthralled at the content, especially the stories. I found the sessions on Akhlaq very useful and believe that such topics should be expounded as much as possible. The organisation was excellent also and would like to thank all those who made it possible." Student of Tanzania.



"The lecture of Shaykh al-Gharawi was an excellent session which answered many of our questions. Such sessions should be held more frequently. The trip to visit Ayatollah Safi was an excellent trip that got us all very close to a marja taqleed and allowed us to ask any questions we had. Dr Rafi'ee was excellent as usual and Br Issa bin Rashid was very enlightening." Mahmood Daya of Tanzania.

- 3.1.2 Students are given a range of pastoral services including financial support, emergency welfare relief, and housing assistance. 9 students currently receive housing assistance.
- 3.1.3 The Office holds regular consultations with students on their needs and requirements and provides training and development where required.
- 3.1.4 The Office distributes resource materials to support the students' study programmes and to keep them abreast of activities outside of Qum.
- 3.1.5 Exceptional programmes, such as the lectures delivered in Ramadhan and Muharram, are provided for online download via The World Federation website.
- 3.1.6 The Office maintains an English resource library which is rich in both printed and audio-visual content. This also contains a children's section where students can access material that are otherwise unavailable in Iran for the education of their children.
- 3.1.7.1 The Office maintains regular links with Maraje in Iran. A 6 monthly report of the Tableegh work of The World Federation is presented to each Marja in Farsi.
- 3.1.7.2 The Office has also met personally with leading Maraje including Ayatullah Safi Gulpaygani, Ayatullah Waheed Khurasani, Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, and Ayatullah Noori Hamadani.
- 3.1.7.3 The close relationship built with Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli led to a book exhibition at the Qum Office with a 50% discount. A staggering 23,194 volumes of books were sold within 3 days by students from Pakistan, Indonesia, Tanzania, India, UK, USA, Afghanistan, Ghana, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Morocco, Canada, Tajikistan, Turkey, Thailand, Denmark, Russia, Algeria and UAE.

"This experience of cooperation between Al-Isra Publications and The World Federation Qum Office was great. Alhamdulillah, the exhibition of Ayatullah al-Udhma Jawadi Amuli's works was very well received by the foreign scholars in Qum and we hope that this sort of programme will continue to take place in the future years." Shaykh Murtaza Jawadi, son of Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli.

3.1.8.1 Relationships with other organisations

Student applications to study in Qum are supported by the Office and are further facilitated by the excellent cooperation that the Office has established with the Hawza authority: Jamia al-Mustafa. Through this relationship the Qum Office is seeking to leverage the best support and conditions for foreign students in Qum.



3.1.8.2 Regular meetings are held with the World Ahlul Bayt Assembly and a number of projects have been discussed where the two organisations could add value to Shia communities worldwide. This has included the possible resolution of the visa problems faced by US and UK citizens, as well as business opportunities.

3.1.9.1 Madinah and Bab summer courses for youths

The Madinah and Bab summer courses continue for youths aged 14-24 throughout the world. The course is heavily subsidised and runs for three weeks. It aims to provide education, spirituality, mentoring and networking. Every year a number of non-Khoja students receive full sponsorship. The application process is undertaken with cooperation from the regional federations and some jamaats.

3.1.9.2 The students are encouraged to become helpers on the course and to join the organisational team. The retention of students into existing community structures and projects is excellent.

3.1.9.3 The spiritual and moral effects upon students are immense. Some feedback is provided below from 2007 and 2008:

With daily doses of Islamic lectures, praying on time in Jamaat, at times praying Tahajjud, gave me a kind of spiritual upliftment. ... the trip has been like a U- turn in my life. I will never ever forget the camps' experiences; they are engraved in my mind ... I have greatly benefited from the camp and would urge the organizers and parents to give value and importance to hold such programs regularly, I would highly advocate youths worldwide to attend the camp at least once in their lifetime. Ali Raza Khimji of Dubai.

"Being a university student I can honestly say that this trip would benefit any youth older or younger and any parents considering sending their children abroad. This trip is a once in a lifetime opportunity which cannot be missed. I especially recommend this journey to all sisters as I will assure you it will inshallah be an unforgettable experience." Sidika Govani of Peterborough.

"There are no words that could sufficiently describe the phenomenal two-week experience of The World Federation's Bab al-Ilm Summer Course and the unbelievable spiritual effects it had on me ... I was able to retain this vision and with Allah's (swt) will, I began my reformation with the proper wearing of the hijab ... I started praying on time, reading the Quran everyday, spending time learning more about Shi'ism through various spiritual and ethical texts, and reducing the time I spent watching TV and other time-wasting pursuits. There have been many things worth remembering in my life, but none as profound or as influential as my Bab al-Ilm experience in Iran. I cannot thank Almighty Allah (swt), Imam Reza (as), and Bibi Masuma (as) enough for the opportunity to attend this two-week camp. It is true that these fourteen days make up only a small portion of my life; yet they have had the impact of a lifetime." Sumaira Fatema Ahmed of Regina, Canada.

"I learnt the spirit of brotherhood. Today we stand strong united but because of our small and insignificant differences we tend to shun and be rude to our true brothers in faith. I have made brothers on this trip although we come from different places,



cultures, but we all share one, goal, we await our Imam (as), as the Ansar of Imam Mahdi (as)." Hussein Walji of Dubai

"I began to notice the changes that I found myself making. For one, I actually wanted to wake up in the morning for Namaaz-e Shab. I found myself whispering silently, praying that I incorporate the teachings I have gathered into my daily life. I found myself asking for strength in making one of the biggest decisions of my life. With this I mean beginning a new chapter by putting on the hijab." Mahjabeen Somji of Toronto

3.1.10 Student Grants (Shahriyyah)

The World Federation has been supporting the studies of students in Qum through monthly stipends for a number of years. Following a policy decision in 2000 that has been hitherto untouched, a number of reforms were made to the system and criteria to allow higher quality of graduates:

1. The students must now achieve at least an 80% average in their Hawza exams
2. The students must now be competent in IT skills
3. The students must now be competent in either English or French languages
4. The students should not have been in Qum for more than 5 years

To assist the students in achieving this criteria the Qum Office closely monitors performance, provides support, and subsidises IT and language courses.

Students that have been in Qum for more than 5 years and meet the above criteria may still qualify if they specialize their studies to the following areas:

1. Business Ethics
2. Family Ethics
3. Optimizing teaching techniques to differing ages of children and youths
4. Interaction with Non-Muslims
5. 12th Imam (aj)
6. Any other area that is deemed pertinent to the needs of the community

3.2 Continuous Personal Development Courses (CPD)

In 2005, 50 leading Muballigheen gathered for the IEB Muballigheen Retreat in which they debated strategies for a training programme for community preachers. From this discussion emerged the Muballigheen Training Programme (MTP) for new Muballigheen and the innovative CPD programme for existing Muballigheen and madrasah teachers.

CPD courses are short modular courses that are offered intensively over short periods of time and are aimed at training and updating Zakireen and madrasah teachers. The first batch of the CPD courses and their subject matter were inspired by the Muballigheen themselves at the retreat.



- 3.2.1 In Europe 5 CPD courses have been conducted in partnership with CoEJ:
1. Qur'anic Sciences: 16 participants attended from Europe and North America
 2. Media Skills: 8 Muballigheen attended from Europe and North America
 3. Aqaid: 16 participants attended from Europe and East Africa
 4. Family Ethics: 16 participants attended from Europe and East Africa
 5. Public Speaking: 14 participants from Europe and East Africa

- 3.2.2 The format and professional delivery of the courses ensures that the impact and levels of learning are of the highest degree. A flavour of the feedback is presented below:

CPD on Qur'anic Sciences by Shaykh Abbas Jaffer:

"This course on Qur'anic Sciences was very useful ... It has given me the encouragement to implement such a course in North America. The CPD concept is excellent to help our community, especially the Zakireen, to study further and develop their knowledge." Batul bai Najafi of Minnesota.

"I looked for information, instruction and inspiration and Alhamdulillah I found all three during this course. We benefited from a wealth of knowledge from Sheikh Abbas Jaffer and now it is up to us to follow up, research and implement such knowledge in each of our communities." Muallim Zulfikar Manji of Peterborough.

CPD on Aqaid (Islamic Theology) by Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail:

"This has been one of the best courses I have been to, without a doubt." Azra Fazal of London (Stanmore).

"It was spiritually uplifting, and time just flew by." (Abbas Khaku of London) (Stanmore).

"It was excellent. I will be going back with lot of knowledge. I came with a shadow of sadness but am leaving with happiness." Nasira Jaffer of Leicester.

"It fulfilled all my expectations, and it gave us tools for doing more in Madrasah and Intra faith discussions. It was motivating and inspiring." Zulfikar Manji of Peterborough.

CPD on Family Ethics by Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail:

"I have really liked it so far, because [1] we were taught to specify our goals based on the teachings of the Qur'aan and Ahl ul Bayt, and [2] we were given the opportunity to exchange ideas, and [3] it has been interactive." Shahista Kanani of La Chaux du Fonds.

"Despite having been married for over a quarter of a century, I still discovered things that would add value to the rest of my married life." (Zeenat Rattansey of London (Hyderi)).



"I found it very interesting and useful. It is very well prepared, organised and presented." Akil Lalji of Arusha.

CPD on Public Speaking by Shaykh Abbas Ismail, Mulla Mohamed Kassamali and Dr Mahmood Datoo:

"It's a definite must, if you want to enter the public speaking domain you must attend such a course." Hassanain Abdulla of Leicester.

"I've found the course very beneficial. Although I could collate information to structure a lecture, but, due to coming to the course, I am now able to present that information in a much more efficient and direct way." Ahmad Kaouri of Milton Keynes.

3.2.2 In North America 3 CPD courses have been conducted in partnership with NASIMCO:

1. Aqaid: more than 80 participants attended the course in Minnesota
2. Family Ethics: more than 40 participants attended the course in Allentown
3. Qur'anic Sciences: delivered in New York

3.3.1 Tableegh through multi-media

From speeches at the funeral of Mulla Saheb and discussions held at conference 2000, Tableegh via multi-media, concentrating specifically on the lectures of Mulla Saheb, was an objective that was initially set in 2001. Islamic Education has taken up this challenge and 9 years on has embarked upon an increased effort to produce multi-media resources on Islamic topics and occasions with the focus being Mulla Saheb. The following lectures by Mulla Saheb have been made available via CDs and DVDs:

- A. Nubuwwat: the philosophy of Prophethood
- B. Adalat: the concept of the Justice of Allah
- C. Marja'iyah: the institution of Taqleed and following a Mujtahid
- D. Islamic Concepts: lectures which blend Aqaid and Akhlaq
- E. Hadith al-Qudsi: explication of this type of hadith
- F. Lectures after Fajr: covering a range of topics
- G. History of Imam Ali

"All praise belongs to the Almighty, Who gave me an opportunity to be present for the Fatiha Khwani of Marhum Mulla Asgharali Sahib at Stanmore in London in March 2000. At this event we had suggested that all his majalis, lessons, sermons, etc. be digitalized for the benefit of posterity. Although it was felt at the time that this was a difficult and an insurmountable task, we are pleased to see that WF-Islamic Education has been able to publish a number of CDs and DVDs on Mulla's lectures. These noble efforts are an excellent way of preserving his memory and teachings for generations to come. We pray that maximum efforts will be put to gather audio and video presentations of scholars and great speakers and make them easily available for the benefit of all those interested." Shaykh Hasanayn Kassamali, Director – The Academy for Learning Islam.



3.3.3 Other exceptional lectures are also digitalised and made available including Shaykh Murtaza Alidina's lectures on Qur'anic commentary.

3.3.4 Resources are also made available at the occasions of Hajj, Ramadhan, Rajab and Sha'baan. All MP3 files are also available for download via The World Federation website. This proved to be a ground-breaking initiative that has now been adopted by Hajj groups who provide an MP3 player to their Hujjaj.

3.4.1 Support to Muballigheen

An email group has been facilitated for the Zakireen to exchange news and views on a number of topics and issues.

3.4.2 In addition to the CPD courses, a number of educational seminars have been organised specifically for the Zakireen:

- A. Seminar on a thesis entitled 'Divine Economics'
- B. Seminar on Contemporary Issues in Qur'anic Hermeneutics
- C. Seminar on 'Knowledge of the Soul'

"This was an excellent presentation. I found it very informative and an eye-opener for the development of research into other sciences through the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt." Mulla Mohamed Kassamali of Peterborough, after attending the seminar on Divine Economics.

"The seminar was very informative and contained lots of things we had not been exposed to before - such as the analysis of the Qur'anic sciences from a historical viewpoint. Such seminars help to encourage our youth to learn more from the Holy Qur'an." Muallim Mujtaba Muhsin of Leicester after the seminar on Qur'anic Hermeneutics.

"This seminar brought an intellectual aspect to Qur'anic interpretation and has encouraged us to do more reading." Muallim Taha Dharsi of Stanmore after the seminar on Qur'anic Hermeneutics.

3.4.3 Resources are provided to Zakireen to assist them in preparation and research. In addition to this, a personal gift is provided annually to Muballigheen throughout the world by the President of The World Federation.

3.5 Dar al Tableegh

The offices of Islamic Education also serve as a beacon for the propagation of Islam. The centre is used for youth activities, children's library, and consultation events. The office receives an average of over 100 visitors per month. During the three years of this term books and CDs worth £123,000 have been distributed throughout the world free of charge.



3.6 Other work

- 3.6.1 The department continues to provide 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.
- 3.6.2 The department regularly supports the development of Indo-Pak communities in the United Kingdom through Majlis e Ulama e Shia. Resources and training costs are provided based upon recommendation from Majlis e Ulama e Shia.

4.0 Islamic Religious Education (IRE)

- 4.1 Following the report by the IRE Coordinator in 2006 and following the resolution at the Dubai Triennial Conference of the same year, the performance results of the individual madaris was shared with each madrasah and with the appropriate regional federation. Regional federations were allocated the responsibility to work with the madaris in their region in an effort to help them to upgrade and improve performance.

4.2 GCSE Qualification in Islamic Studies

Following the introduction of this qualification subject into most European madaris and into schools in East Africa, the Islamic Education department has provided support to madaris and teachers and students to assist them in delivering and gaining this qualification.

- 4.1.1 A manual of notes was compiled, printed and distributed at a subsidised price to teachers and students.
- 4.1.2 Resources to aid revision based on 'mind map' concepts were prepared and gifted to each student undertaking GCSE examinations. This support was combined with revision technique training days for all madaris in Europe. Feedback from students included:

"Today's training was very good as it went through some difficult aspects and questions that might come up in the exam. Also I found the Mind Maps helped me a lot to learn about each section."

'This session covered all key topics and has greatly improved my confidence.'

'The mind maps will allow me to refer to them when revising without going through the arduous process of taking pages of notes.'

- 4.1.3 An annual 'Inset' training day is organised for teachers from across the UK madaris and is conducted by the examination board. This training focuses on actual past exam papers and exam technique. It also provides the teachers with the opportunity to exchange information and best practices. Approximately 40 teachers attend this every year.



"Thanks for the excellent ongoing support in an informal learning environment."
Madrasah teacher.

4.1.4.1 In the February 2009 'Inset' teachers were introduced to a revised syllabus that the Edexcel examination board had embarked upon. A number of concerns were raised including the absence of consultation with Shia groups and the irrelevance of certain parts to schools in East Africa. This prompted research into alternative examination boards. Following a further consultation with madaris in August, it was decided that the GCSE provider would change to the AQA examination board due to their willingness to accept the Shia school of thought as a valid interpretation within their examinations and mark schemes.

4.1.4.2 Manuals of notes, mind maps and other related resources based on the new AQA specification are now being prepared and will inshallah be with madaris in time for October 2009.

4.2 A Level Qualification in Islamic Studies

At the August madaris consultation, madaris were also presented with information on Islamic Studies at A Level. Madaris decided to take up the A Level offered by AQA from September 2009.

4.2.1 As with GCSE support, Manuals of notes, mind maps and other related resources based on the AQA A Level are now being prepared and will inshallah be with madaris in time for October 2009.

4.3 Resources

The excellent power point resources prepared by a volunteer in Reunion Island has been copied and distributed to madaris throughout the world.

4.4 Student Scholarships

The Islamic Education department continues to assess and process student applications for grants and bursaries to pursue Islamic studies. The Council of European Jamaats is shadowing this process and will be in a position to administer this directly in the future once the necessary capacity is formed.

5.0 Publications

5.1 In an effort to produce publications of higher quality, the department has hitherto launched 2 new titles in the term and is awaiting the finalisation of other titles before or just after conference 2009:

- A. The Sacred Effusion: a commentary on Ziyarat al-Ashura: launched in October 2009
- B. The Sublime Purification: 40 Hadith on Zakat: launched in October 2009
- C. The Message of the Qur'an: volume 1: under preparation
- D. Anecdotes for Reflection: part 4: under editing
- E. A Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims: abridged version: under preparation



6.0 Capacity Building in Tableegh

6.1 The World Federation appointed a new Assistant Secretary General responsible for Islamic Education. It also appointed a new manager and assistant at the Qum Office. A graduate of the Hawza of Qum was given 1 year's training in the UK in a post-graduate certificate in education before being appointed as the designated tutor at the IIPS in Damascus.

6.2.1 A system of training and developing helpers for the Madinah and Bab summer courses is now successfully established. The helpers are recruited by way of a job description and interview selection. A training programme is also held which equips helpers with a plethora of new skills and processes for better engaging with the youths.

"The information was really helpful and has made me prepare for the camp thoroughly. It was useful to define the responsibilities in depth so that there are no uncertainties. I feel much more motivated and I understand I need to prepare myself so that I can be of help to the students." Fatima Zahra Datoo of Leicester.

"This training helped to put us in the right frame of mind. It was excellent in building rapport amongst the brothers and gave us confidence and inspiration. I particularly enjoyed learning more about myself and how our preferences can impact on others." Mohamed Zamin Alidina of London (Stanmore).

"I found the approach to be very professional and learned a lot about myself. It also gave me a helpful set of skills. I found the role plays really useful as they helped us to tailor our reactions to situations." Fatema Khimji of Birmingham.

6.2.2 In 2007 6 youths were appointed to the position of student helper, 5 from Europe and 1 from North America. In 2008 9 were appointed, 8 from Europe and 1 from North America. In 2009 7 were appointed, 5 from Europe and 2 from North America. The helpers return from Iran and provide invaluable feedback to the department. All are automatically recruited into the organisational team at Islamic Education and participate in other community structures and Tableegh work.

6.3 To create harmony and cooperation amongst the student body at the IIPS in Damascus, a three day development programme was conducted to help students envision and create a 'Learning Community' and to enhance peer to peer learning. A flavour of the feedback is provided below:

"I will stop judging people without much thought or information."

"I will start to appreciate others more."

"I will stop talking over others."

"I will stop being defensive when receiving feedback."



"Though I have participated in many work-shops in the past such as the one held for us here, this one in particular was definitely eye-opening in that it allowed me to learn more about myself as well as see things from different perspectives. To some degree for me it brought to light many of the ahadeeth from our aimmah about the importance of knowing oneself and how to interact with others. It was really nice to see all of us students united and motivated to achieve one goal, and that is to develop a strong, spiritual, confident and vibrant Learning Community."

"Together with the structure and content of the course, I thoroughly enjoyed working with my colleagues as it helped me to understand myself and the people around me a lot better. I have realised how deep and complex the 'self' is, and if we all take time to examine and understand a portion of 'ourselves', we will definitely view the world with a more colourful and tolerant perspective. I am confident that this seminar will complement our spiritual development."

6.4.1 A Personal Development Programme for current and former students of Hawza Ilmiyya Qum was held in London. 11 students attended and were given a 5 day development programme on emotional intelligence, rapport building, skills of appreciation, confidence, team work, adult learning methods, experiential learning, networking, giving and receiving feedback, visioning and action planning.

6.4.2 The impact of the programme was immense and a glimpse is provided below:

"The significance of seeking more information in identifying the needs of an individual ... This helped me to understand how dangerous it is to jump the gun and judge immediately. I am now more conscious to not merely make assumptions."
Shaykh Ali Arastu, USA

"I personally made great use of the things we learned on my first talk at Hyderi Jamaat in South London. I could really note the difference in the way I viewed the audience and received feedback. MBTI has really helped me to understand so many things that I could not understand and appreciate before."
Sister Fatema Manekia, UK

"I feel I have become more open minded and realised that the different methods of delivering information and knowledge in schools, can also be used to deliver Islamic knowledge in Islamic settings and an interactive delivery can attract more of an audience." Sister Aliya Datoo, UK

"My Tableegh trip in Ramadhan was amazing and be sure the PDP course had a great contribution in that. Alhamdollilah, I got the chance to practice most of the things I learned from getting feedback, adult teaching methods, in my sessions with youths, and sessions with ladies, also in inter faith discussions. I started to use a white board in my majalis and had Q & A sessions after majalis." Shaykh Kumail Rajani, India

" ... I decided to do away with the podium and instead I was walking around amongst the crowd, soliciting their views as I made use of power point presentations to convey my message. I even took in a plant and a shiny ball during



some of the presentations to make my analogies and messages more effective. The crowd was more receptive, more engaging and more interested in what I had to say. Overall, I thought it was a good tabligh experience, with quite a bit of the credit going to the PD course. The meeting with the youths and the ladies of the community was my first experience of listening to these sectors of the community as they voiced their expectations and concerns. For example, many of the youths said, 'don't talk at us, talk to us' from the pulpit. I tried to do that and one of those evenings a youth came to appreciate the tone in which I spoke to them."

Brother Murtaza Bachoo, Canada

- 6.5 Capacity building workshops to enhance spirituality and involvement within Islamic Education were conducted by Shaykh Abbas Ismail at Allentown during Muharram and Arusha as part of the 2009 Nakuru Summer Camp organised by Dar es Salaam Tabligh Sub-Committee.. The impact upon the youths was immense:

"Shaykh Ismail brought in supporting material for the discussion. As a visual learner, this helped to understand the concepts being taught better. Also, appreciated the manner in which the discussion was held. Impressed with the balanced knowledge (secular & Islamic) that was taught." Student in Allentown.

"This was an awesome experience. I really enjoyed it. I've never thought about myself in this way before." Student in Allentown.

"The workshop gives an insight about self recognition and hence to understand what it will take for us to improve our soul and as a human being. Thank you for this session; gets youths involved in an interactive/informal manner." Student in Allentown.

"I actually came to know my innerself and realised why certain people have different approaches to certain things." Student in Arusha.

"This programme should be given more importance as it helps in recognising hidden potentials in individuals that can be used for the betterment of the society." Student in Arusha.

"Great program should be done more and to the whole community. Thank you for giving us the great opportunity." Student in Arusha.

"An excellent programme especially for youths to recognise themselves and others. Make plans, goals choose tight career and maybe start a journey to a place they never knew was present." Student in Arusha.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Form a sustainable vision and strategy for continued work in Bosnia.
- 7.2 Offer sponsorship and opportunities to individuals in Spain / South America to undertake a needs assessment and feasibility study for a long term strategy for Tableegh work to the Spanish speaking world.



- 7.3 A plan for short and long term Tableegh to our community in India to be formulated and implemented.
- 7.4 A bi-annual Muballigheen retreat, as was done in 2005, to be an immovable part of the work of Islamic Education. This will give greater impetus to the work undertaken and will give ownership of the task to Muballigheen as well as undertaking assessment of needs of existing Muballigheen.
- 7.5 The Office in Qum to be granted greater resources and the scope of work to be widened, specifically to cater for an adult CPD with a global intake.
- 7.6 CPD courses in North America and Europe to continue under the regional federations. The World Federation to work with AFED and Council of Gujerat to implement such courses in Africa, India and other jamaats throughout the world.
- 7.7 A committee to be formed to watch the developments of GCSE, A Level, BA Level and MA Level qualifications within Islamic Studies and to seek opportunities of harnessing these qualifications for the spiritual development of our community and to ensure a sustainable vision of education within our community.
- 7.8 A madrasah retreat to be organised at least once every three years to assess needs for provision of resources, development of curriculum, teacher training and sharing best practices.
- 7.9 Islamic Learning Materials (ILM) to be developed and implemented in madaris.
- 7.10 An assessment to be carried out on how best to ensure the regular and sustainable production of high quality publications and to appoint personnel if necessary.
- 7.11 For successful and regular projects such as the Madinah and Bab short courses and the Qum Students' Personal Development Programme, a ring fenced budget to be pre-approved and assigned to the department so as to facilitate advanced planning of such activities and to avoid crisis situations where lack of funding may become an obstacle to the implementation.
- 7.12 The Office Bearers / ASG to make 6 monthly visits to the Maraje and the offices in Bosnia, Qum and Damascus.

8.0 Conclusion

Following the 2006 Conference much of the modus operandi of the department has changed significantly. Cooperation and communication with regional federations has increased but more needs to be done to prevent unnecessary adherence to protocol and bureaucracy; this will ensure that the cooperation is of value and not merely an exercise. The absence of a clearly defined budget can restrict the implementation of the department's action plans. The global financial crisis has also hindered some of the work of the department. The absence of a dedicated member of staff to oversee the publications section has significantly limited the effectiveness of this area of work.



The department has succeeded in attracting new volunteers and in rebuilding teams and structures to better deliver the objectives more effectively. The projects appear more coordinated with a better sense of purpose and overall direction.

The resolution of Dubai 2006 has now shaped the workings of the department. However, the challenge going into the new term will be to maintain the numerous advantages of the new structure whilst ensuring that any pitfalls are avoided.

And all Praise is for Allah, Lord of the Worlds