ندوة الجامعات والعمل الإسلامي في إفريقيا
تخت شمار
المقول الداعية في مواجهة التحديات في إفريقيا
قاعة الصداقة - الخرطوم
الاثنين 1- الأربعاء 23/2/1435هـ

الكتاب الثاني:
دور الجامعات ومؤسسات العمل الإسلامي:
1/ دور الجامعات.
2/ دور مؤسسات العمل الإسلامي.

تـ: عبد القوى عبد العليم الحسن
يونيو 1435هـ
فاتحة:

ربما تجاوز عدد المسلمين الأفارقة نصف سكان القارة في إفريقيا جنوب الصحراء لأن شمال إفريقيا أصلا ذو طبيعة عربية إسلامية، ولكن في إفريقيا ما وراء الصحراء ثقل إسلامي مقدر وذلك في نيجيريا والنيجر ومالي مرورا بشاد وانتهاء بإثيوبيا وشرق إفريقيا حيث يسود المسلمين. بيد أن تأثيرات الإسلام تضعف في الجنوب الإفريقي "الكنغو" وأنجولا وانتهاء بجنوب إفريقيا، على العموم فإن وزن المسلمين الاقتصادى والسياسي والثقافى أقل بكثير من تقليل السكانى. وأن هذا التقليل لم يتم ترميته بعد إلى أوزان تفاعلية واقتصادية وسياسية لأسباب كثيرة تتعلق بالاستعمار واحتلال المسلمين عن التعليم في المدارس الكنسية، فعلى وقت قريب كان يقدر بر.95% من البرنامج التعليمي في إفريقيا جنوب الصحراء تديره الإرساليات المسيحية.

تثير هذه الوضعية للمسلمين في إفريقيا، قضية الجامعات والعمل الإسلامي فيها، لأن الجامعة تستمد مشروعاتها وفاعليتها من تجاوبها مع المجتمع الذي تقوم عليه، وما أكثر الجامعات وسط المجتمعات الإفريقية المسلمة ولكنها ناشطة فيها وغائبة عنها - أي غائبة عن مطابقتها وخصوصياتها.

ولعل من شروط نهضة المجتمعات ارتباط جامعتها بهمومها وقضاياها، وقد لمست هذه الندوة التي عقدت في رحاب جامعة إفريقيا العالمية وبالتعاون مع رابطة الجامعات الإسلامية هذه القضية وتحت عنوان ندوة الجامعات والعمل الإسلامي في إفريقيا، وكان ذلك في فواتح مارس 2004م، أي قبل نحو خمسة أعوام، ولكن ما تزال القضية مفتوحة، وتأمل أن يؤدي طبعها ونشر أبحاث هذه الندوة إلى تقوية العمل العلمي وشدة في اتجاه التوصيات والحلول التي تطوت إليها الأبحاث.

أ.د. حسن مكي محمد أحمد
الأربعاء 3 جمadi الأول 1430هـ
الموافق 29/3/2009م

ولي التوفيق...
القمة:

أقامت جامعة إفريقيا العالمية (الخرطوم – السودان) بالتعاون مع رابطة الجامعات الإسلامية ندوة
الجامعات والعمل الإسلامي في إفريقيا. تحت شعار: "التعليم الفاعلة في مواجهة التحديات في إفريقيا". وذلك
في الفترة من الاثنين الموافق 3 إلى الأربعاء 6/4/2000 م بقاعة الصفا بالخرطوم برعاية كريمة
من السيد وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي وذلك. اشتملت الندوة على جلسة إفتتاحية، وعد (7)
جلسات، إضافة إلى الجلسة الختامية التي قررت فيها التوصيات واعتمدت.

خاطب الجلسة الإفتتاحية كل من البروفسور / عمر السكاني الشيخ مدير جامعة إفريقيا العالمية السابق
والدكتور / محمد أحمد عبد الله الحكيم رئيسي مجلس أمناء الجامعة السابق، كما خاطب الجلسة نفسها كل من
البروفسور / عبد الله عبد الله الزيد ممثل رابطة العالم الإسلامي، والبروفسور / تعيش السلالوطي
رئيسي رابطة الجامعات الإسلامية وقتندة، والدكتور / عماد البشري وزير الإرشاد والأوقاف بالسودان.

أzialا، والبروفسور / بشار محمد ضمن الجماعة العليا والبحث العلمي (بالسودان) الأسبق.

كما خاطب الجلسة الختامية البروفسور / عمر السكاني الشيخ مدير الجامعة شاكو الحضور ومقدرا
إسهاماتهم العلمية وإسهاماتهم.

شارك في الندوة عدد مقدر من أستاذة الجامعات والباحثين بعض المواقع ذات الاهتمام والصلة
من داخل السودان، إضافة إلى متثليين عدد من أفكار العالم العربي والإسلامي والإفريقي والعالم، فضلاً
عن منظمات العمل الطلابي الدولية في مجال العمل الإسلامي في إفريقيا، منها:

منظمات العمل الطوعي الإسلامي من مختلف الأقطار العربية والإسلامية والإفريقية. وجامعات السودان
و جامعة المغرب وجامعة جمهورية مصر العربية وجامعة عمان وجامعة من نييجيريا ومعهد الدارسات
العالية والثقافية بأمريكا وجامعة ماليريا وجامعة من تشاد وجامعتين وأكاديميات من المملكة العربية
السعودية وجامعتين من الجامعات العربية وجامعة جنوب إفريقيا، وقد أمّ الندوة كثير من الباحثين
والأستاذات وطلاب الدراسات العليا بالسودان.

قدمت حوالي أربعين ورقة علمية غلت جميع محاور الندوة التي شملت المشكلات المعاصرة،
والسياسية، ودور الجامعات، والمؤسسات الأكاديمية ومعاهيد العلم الإسلامي، وقضايا العاولة،
وإجراء، كما تم التعريض على جميع الأوراق العلمية ومناقشتها، وخرجت الندوة بوصولات متغيرة
أписан أها تدفع بالعمل الإسلامي بالقارة الأفريقية إلى الأمام، وتوجه كريم من البروفسور / حسن مكي
محمد أحمد مدير الجامعة ينشر في جميع أعمال الندوة ونشرها في كتاب مهم بكشف عام لمسهل تداولها
وتعني القادة المرجعية منها؛ وعلى يدينا نبدأ تقديم الكتاب.

أستاذ مشترك - جامعة إفريقيا العالمية
10.4.2000
Networking & Co-operation for Muslim NGOs in the Development of Muslim Communities in Africa: A Developmental Approach

By Mohamed Amra, World Assembly of Muslim Youth, South Africa
Networking & Co-operation for Muslim NGOs
in the Development of Muslim Communities in Africa:
A Developmental Approach

Abstract

The challenges facing the Islamic work on the continent of Africa are daunting and
sometimes depressing. In particular, in the aftermath of September 11, and the
subsequent decline of flow of funds from the Gulf countries to Muslim NGOs in Africa.
The need for networking between MNGOs within the same community, country, region
and continent is more compelling than ever before.

In this paper the need for networking is motivated and some ideas are proposed for the
establishment of a Forum for networking in Africa.

The principles of development are also discussed and a very strong plea is made to
international and local NGOs to practice a developmental strategy in the development of
Muslim communities in Africa.
Networking & Co-operation for Muslim NGOs
in the Development of Muslim Communities in Africa:
A Developmental Approach

By Mohamed Amra

A. NETWORKING

1. INTRODUCTION

Muslim communities in Africa stand at the threshold of a challenging future, full of prospects as well as a host of problems. The challenges facing the continent are daunting and sometimes depressing, but through faith in Allah, nothing is too difficult to overcome.

To make Africa grow and prosper, it is essential that we have faith, vision, and work with a strategic plan. It is precisely in this realm that Islam can be the guiding light, and Muslims, the beacon of hope and resolution for a continent whose desperation has reached alarming proportions.

Muslims have been in Africa for over fourteen centuries. Much has happened during this period. We cannot live in the glory of the past, but it is what we can do in the future that should be put on the agenda for Islam in Africa. Otherwise, another century will soon pass, and those who come after us will be left in an even more desperate situation.

With fourteen centuries of Islam in Africa, we need to look to the future with faith and hope. Much more can be accomplished through networking between the rich tapestries of organizations that operate within the continent. The challenges and opportunities that face the continent as a whole transcend the ability of any single organization to undertake the task alone. It is only through co-operation and collective spirit that a better destiny and future for the Ummah and the people of the continent will be made.

In this paper some ideas are presented on how we can advance and develop through more effective networking. Whatever we state in this position paper is certainly not the last word on the matter. We look forward to your input, analysis and constructive thought.
2. MOTIVATION

The purpose of this paper is to look at better ways to co-ordinate effective networking amongst Muslim organizations and how to respond more cohesively to the challenges that confront us in Africa. In particular, in the aftermath of the decision of donor agencies in the Gulf countries were 'forced' to stop funding MNGOs in Africa. A cohesive and co-ordinated approach to any challenge facing the Ummah and Islam in Africa and elsewhere is vital in order to protect its interests and identity as a community.

3. OBJECTIVE

A forum needs to be established to serve as the hub to facilitate and co-ordinate networking with Muslim organizations and communities in sub-Saharan Africa. A survey needs to be conducted to determine the exact number of Muslim organizations, the nature of their activities and how effective they are. Muslims must know how strong they really are and where their weaknesses lie and in their moment of need and crisis whom they can really depend on. Some kind of personal rapport needs to be developed between a co-ordinating network office and leadership of the various organizations and communities

4. RESOURCE AVAILABILITY - POTENTIAL & ACTUAL

What kind of resources do we need to make networking workable?

- We need the goodwill and co-operation of Muslim organizational leaders. How can we get them to share in a common vision that goes beyond the narrow confines of their local organization and which focuses more specifically on the needs of the Ummah and the nation in general.

- We need to tap into the resources of influential individuals, both professional and entrepreneurs.

- We need to form alliances with other groups outside the Muslim community. There are issues of common concern that require the collective effort of all groups in society. The Prophet (SAW) taught us the wisdom of forming alliances.

- We need to network internationally with the Ummah, and draw on their resources.

- We need to draw on the resources of international Muslim agencies,
C Particularly those Muslim companies abroad, whose large donations end up in the
coffers of other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). We need to look at better
ways of marketing our ideas and causes, making it palatable to these international
companies to contribute to our fund raising efforts.

C We need to sell our message to the Muslim grassroots. Unless the masses confer
credibility on us, our work will remain marginal. They can only do so if they
understand our cause as theirs. We need to empower them.

C We need to build a working relationship with stakeholders and the government of
the day.

C We also need to establish a rapport with other political parties and NGO’s.

5. FROM WHERE SHALL WE BEGIN?

What is the first step we need to take to put our programme of networking into effect?
Unless we lay down a baseline programme with a step-by-step programme of daily
involvement our idea of networking will remain a grandiose dormant idea.

C First things first. We need to arrange a meeting with the leadership of all major
organisations in each country. We should start off locally then work towards the
regional, national and continental levels. At this meeting we need to familiarise the
leadership with the need for networking and how this will advance the cause of
Islam and the interests of the Ummah in Africa. We need to analyse the needs of
the community and set out strategic plans to meet these needs by networking the
donor and aid agencies with organizations on the ground. Once organizations
network together no task will be beyond the capability of this community. What we
lack in numbers will be compensated by our unity and organizational ability.

C We need to work towards a full-time secretariat whose primary task will be to co-
ordinate the networking, strategic planning, harnessing of resources, and
facilitating.

C One of the tasks that should be taken up immediately is to obtain the database of all
organizations. We should evaluate this database and look at ways to update it. We
should also evaluate the organizations in terms of their role, work, manpower,
vision, and other resources. We should write to these organizations with the idea of getting some kind of feedback.

We need to formulate a vision, plans, goals and the kind of resources that we need to develop this kind of networking secretariat. This could be the marketing document to solicit the business community to buy into the plan and idea.

We should use e-technology more effectively to put our ideas across to this wide spectrum of organizational diversity. Communication, interaction, cross-fertilisation of ideas, and keeping abreast with what is happening inside our community, nation, and the international community is vital.

Unless we take the rest of the community with us, our plans and strategies will not have the same impact and effect.

6. OBSTACLES

There are certain barriers that stand between our ideals and its achievement. The community does not have a culture of networking. Every organization sees itself as an independent tribe and village. Some people will be downright sceptical of networking or organizational co-ordination. There are those people in our community who are downright negative because of previous failures to get organizations to work together. We will have to break through these psychological barriers to make networking workable. To make matters worse, the organizations with strong ideological positions will feel threatened by networking, fearing that its ideological standpoint may be compromised. The lack of vision and strategic outlook needs to be bridged through networking. Also our self-image as Muslims needs to be reasserted.

The defeats we have suffered throughout the world this century have battered our sense of identity and self-image. The idea of one Ummah has become a slogan rather than a goal. We need to develop a new organizational mindset.

That is outward looking and pioneering. We need to cultivate a frontier mentality, which puts us right at the edge of history where we will have to make better history. We have to break the siege of the Muslim mind and outlook. Networking is going to be tough but necessary. We will need persistence, human and capital resources, to make it workable.
We have also not developed a culture of syndication and partnerships in our business relationships. We somehow cannot think of running our businesses beyond the ability of our families. Our family-run businesses cannot make the transmission to management run corporations. The way we run our businesses from the limited family base have influenced the way we govern our organizations. This also militates against networking.

7. WAY FORWARD

History bears witness that behind every great idea, discovery, invention, and exceptional achievements was a dream, a desire to better organise and mobilise our community. What we want to do and achieve may appear cynical and farfetched to many people, but deep down in our hearts and minds we must believe that it is realistic and achievable.

The ideas expressed in this position paper are tentative, and its full potential will only be reached through our collective input. The real test, however, is whether we will be able to give these ideas feet to walk, to jump off the pages on which it is written.

A workshop needs to be convened to develop a strategy as to how best we can network and what are the appropriate strategies to make such a programme effective.

8. STAKEHOLDERS IN COMMUNITY NETWORKING

8.1 Local & International Muslim NGOs

The emergence of NGOs internationally is a new phenomenon in the Muslim world; it is more recent in the last 30 years. During this period and particularly in the last 15-20 years we witness the emergence of numerous local and international Muslim NGOs operating in Africa to serve the needs of the community.

In this section, concern is raised in respect to the developmental approach MNGOs are adopting in their attempt to develop Muslim communities in Africa be it minority or majority. An in-depth analysis of each of these organizations would have been an excellent contribution to this conference. In the absence of such a research paper my assessment would be general and based on my observations and in some cases intimate association with some of the IMNGOs.
In this paper some specific examples are used to illustrate an observation without naming the organization concerned as this paper is not meant to be a criticism of Muslim NGOs but a critique so as to assess the approaches of MNGOs have adopted in contributing to the development of Muslim minorities in Africa.

In general, the objectives/vision of all MNGOs is to assist in the development of Muslim communities. They differ in their strategies, objectives, methodology and area of operation, etc. The common thread is to promote Islam and the development of Muslim communities.

Broadly MNGOs can be divided into different sectors:

Social Welfare
- Disaster Relief
- Poverty alleviation
- Health Care
- Sanitation, wells, boreholes, etc.
- Orphanages

Education
- Primary and Secondary Schools
- Bursary for schools
- Scholarships – under and post graduate
- Vocational training = hard and soft skills
- Youth development

Women
- Health Care
- Skills training
- Education

Religious
- Construction of Masajid
- Institute for Islamic Studies – madaris
- Sponsorship of Imams
- Muallim training
- Quran Halaqaat
- Dawah, etc
Economic
  Micro-financing
  Job creation
  Employment
Research & Development
  - Are there any Muslim NGOs in this field?
  - Organizational Development

8.2 Private Sector
In addition to the NGOs another important stakeholder/contributor to the development in Africa are donor agencies and the private sector. This maybe a diminishing factor (especially after September 11), nevertheless they still continue to play a role. This sector is largely not formally organised, ad hoc and by its very nature lacks any developmental strategies. It is a purely a donor to a likely recipient who approaches the donor for aid. It must be acknowledged that many private sector companies have created their own charitable divisions with appointed staff to administer their donations. You can thus imagine the diversity in donor strategies/approaches. For example, some donors may have a preference for scholarships, some for building wells, or health care centres, etc. Each group operates on its own, with its own staff administrators, bureaucrats, technocrats, increasing the number of individuals and organizations who are involved in the development of Muslims in Africa. The idea the more the merrier would apply to the amount of aid being contributed, but to what extent this is impacting on the development of Muslims is another area of research to be undertaken.

8.3 Government and Government Agencies
The government and or government agencies also play a major role in the development of communities. The topic of this paper will preclude any discussion of government’s role in the development of Muslim communities. However, it is a major player and MNGOs must review their strategies and how to partner with government to advance their objectives. Increasing the use of partnerships with NGOs to deliver better qualify services to the community. It is therefore imperative that MNGOs seek an open channel with government agencies to access resources both material and human for Muslim Communities.
8.4 Other NGOs

There are numerous other international NGOs outside the Muslim countries especially from the western world operating in Africa and wield enormous influence in the NGO sector. Once again Muslim NGOs must view their relationship with these NGOs to advance their objectives.

8.5 Donor Agencies

These are international or local donor agencies that provide aid to NGOs.

8.6 Muslim Community

The local Muslim community, leadership and other local organizations.

8.7 Other communities

What is the relationship between the Muslim minorities' communities and the majority community and other minority communities in these countries?

B. A Developmental Approach

1. What is Development?

There are numerous definitions of development from a western-secular perspective. Essentially it is do with fulfilling basic human needs from a socio-economic and educational perspective whereby the community is capable of controlling the natural environment and influencing the social environment.

From an Islamic perspective we depend on traditional definitions where Muslim scholars referred to the principles of development based on the basic human needs i.e.: “The necessities (Al Masaleh Al Dharroia) which are five basic necessities without which that life cannot be sustained: religion, life, offspring, (family), mind, and wealth. The Requirements (Al Masaleh Al Hajjia), which are goods and services required for sustaining Al Dharoorat.

The cosmetics (Al Masaleh al Tahsienia), which are goods and services for improving Al Dharoriat until it becomes more of a luxury.” (Dr M Nujaffi, Role of IDB in Supporting
Women Organizations & NGOs to Promote Socio-Economic development And Alleviate Poverty, IDB March 2002).

It is therefore necessary to now contextualise this definition especially in the context of the emergence of new jargon such as 'sustainable development', empowerment, enabling environment.

While an Islamic definition of development will share common ground with a western definition its emphasis on moral and spiritual values makes it more comprehensive with the ultimate goal being to establish a system of life that is ordained by Allah. "The Islamic concept of development is based on Tawhid (the unity of Allah and sovereignty), Al Adl (Justice and equilibrium), Rububiyyah (Divine arrangement for nourishment, sustenance, and directing things towards their perfection); Khalifa (Man's role as vicegerent on Earth) and Tazkiyyah (purification plus growth in all forms).

The word development has narrow connotations in the West. In the Islamic perspective it is Tazkiyyah in its proper moral context and framework, which means purification and growth with highest moral commitment. It encompasses all dimensions of development towards perfections and purification. The Islamic concept of development includes a comprehensive framework including moral spiritual and material aspects. It is devoted to the optimisation of human well being in all these dimensions. Its focus is on man as vicegerent of Allah. Development entails the prosperity of man and purification of his physical and socio-cultural environment. Here human attitudes, tastes, incentives, aspirations are much policy variables as physical resources, like capital, labour, education, etc. It emphasises maximum participation of the people at all levels of decision-making. Finally it stresses the optimal utilisation of resources that Allah has endowed upon man. It also means the equitable use and distribution of these resources for promotion of human relationship on the basis of truth and justice.

Islam envisages development different form the prevailing systems. It derives its worldviews, goals and strategy from Shariah. It gives utmost importance to brotherhood and socio-economic justice and requires both the material and spiritual needs of all human beings. This Islamic normative framework is the guiding principle of committing to cooperate and coordinate in all efforts for human well-being. No other system can energise
and provide conducive atmosphere to different groups of people including "NGOs to work for human welfare that the Islamic system. (Prof. ZM Khan. 'Creating Synergy', Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, India, undated).

1. Development is about growth, nurturing, evolving, improving, equity and advancing a community

2. What is Community Development?
CD is about facilitating change in society (social change) by focusing on people individually an collective (people focused) so that society advances and grows in an enabling environment where people take control of their personal and social life, so that ultimately the community can be self-reliant.

3. Role of the "NGO"
The NGO acts as a facilitator of agent of change or a catalyst to initiate change in communities. It must not be consumed in the process i.e. not do everything for the community but involve the community in the process.

Undoubtedly international Muslim NGOs are contributing large resources for the development of Muslim communities in Africa.

The question is what impact are we having on Muslim communities in terms of their development? Is the delivery of services proportionate to the resources being spent? Are there any criteria to measure levels of success delivery?

In the absence of any scientific evaluation most MNGOs would agree that optimum levels of service delivery are not being met. Are we achieving more or less than 50% of our expected outcomes? Of course the problem is the criteria. That which cannot be measured cannot be achieved is an old saying in management. The question is, how do we optimise the delivery of resources in a world of diminishing resources and increasing demand?

We could excuse the MNGOs for operating in the past without clearly defined strategies as this period could be described as a learning curve for MNGOs. We did not have the necessary know-how or the expertise and human resources. In the last 10-15 years we have witnessed great changes in international NGOs in their strategies, approaches, assessments, etc. MNGOs need to study these changes, take lessons from them and
apply them to their organizations. Or else, we will continue to spend huge resources without achieving the desired outcomes. We could ill afford to continue as present, there can be no excuse for wastage of resources, inefficiencies, poor delivery of services and lack of professionalism in our work. 'The time has come for us to be brutally honest with ourselves. With more than 30 years of involvement of IMNGOs in the development of Muslim communities in Africa it is imperative that MNGOs evaluate their current strategies to determine their successes and failures and redress them appropriately.

In particular, the problem is one of how to approach or how an NGO should engage or assist a community and what role it should play in the process of developing that community.

2. Development Principles

There is enormous research available into NGO operations worldwide with numerous case studies show casing successful operations and reasons for their success. These have now been documented by research analysts as principles for development of communities particularly in the underdeveloped countries. This body of information is now available and MNGOs need to avail themselves of this and incorporate these models of development in their operations.

These principles are enumerated as follows:

3. Survey – Data – Community Profile

A survey to determine a community profile is extremely important for any serious intervention strategy for the development. This information will help to determine the strengths, weaknesses, problems of a community, its human and material resources, etc. 'it will help in the planning of needs and priorities in the community. 'For example it is important to know what percentage of people live below the poverty line, what is the literacy rate in the community, etc.

The operating environment varies in different communities, e.g. variations in poverty levels/socio-economic, political and educational status. The NGO will therefore have to vary strategies in different communities within the same country and in different countries.
Unfortunately, Muslim NGOs do not invest enough on such research with the result that many strategies do not meet the objectives.

4. Needs Analysis and Consultation with Community & Leadership

A well thought out needs analysis or needs identification is critically important in an approach to community development. The process is in itself as important as the results, in that the community and its leaders must be consulted so that they are seen as active participants in the process of development. A broad based consensus must also be reached with the community on the needs identification. The task that follows this is the prioritising of needs in terms of importance in relating to the resource available.

Unfortunately, again, most NGOs do not consult the community and begin imposing their agendas on a community. In some cases the project may well be appropriate but because the process did not include consultation with the community it may not succeed. If the Quranic concept of Shura is to be upheld it is imperative the NGOs consult the community on the ground before embarking on any projects.

5. Organizational Attitudes – Top down Approach

The NGO must have a strong bottom up approach and not a top down approach. This attitude reflects a deep sensed of respect for the community and that their opinion matter. This will engender a positive response from the community and participation from them in the process. A prescriptive approach to local communities is not a viable option for NGOs it must be participatory.

6. Strategic Thinking

Why should we think strategically? Most Muslim NGOs operate at a simplistic planning level without engaging the strategic managing process (defines as strategic formulation and implementation). We are concerned with short-term goals without considering long-term impact, we tend to be concerned with the trees instead of the forest and we tend to be reductionist in our approach.

There are 4 reasons why organizations should engage in strategic management:
1. NGOs that engage in strategic management perform at a higher level. NGOs, which design and implement a strategic plan, tend on average to perform better than organizations, which do not.

2. NGOs that engage in strategic management are more motivated. As critical components of a strategic plan is a vision and a mission to provide a sense of direction to the organizations and its members. By inspiring a shared vision and mission, by specifying a functional long-range philosophy, and by spelling out clear, achievable yet challenging objectives, a strategic plan motivates participants. Leadership studies (Kouzes and Posner) have again and again stressed the tremendous effects of shared visions, and how organizations are moved to achieve amazing results when such visions are clearly enunciated.

3. NGOs that engage in strategic management are more proactive and place environmental forces into logical hierarchy. NGOs that have a concrete strategic plain place can easily anticipate changing environments and act proactively rather than in a knee-jerk manner.

4. NGOs that engage in strategic management are more likely to survive in the long term InshAllah. Because the organization’s thinking is reflected in its strategic plan, everybody within the organization has the same frame of reference.

7. Capacity Building

If we have to pursue the concept of ihsan - excellence in our organizations one of the most important aspect is the issue of capacity building. If we accept the fact that we have little or no strategic thinking, the lack of capacity is a far more serious problem if we wish to develop a community. We have a serious lack of capacity in most of our organizations and therefore the poor results. Strategic thinking and capacity building are the two most important factors contributing to the poor performance of our organizations.

Capacity Building is the heart of development practice. Although some NGOs are now beginning to talk about capacity building and claim to be practising it, the concepts and practices often remain confused and vague.
7.1 What is Capacity Building?

Capacity here refers to the ability of an organization to implement and manage projects, to exercise financial and product accountability, to employ and train staff competent to undertake specific tasks and to report on their work in ways, which are acceptable. In other words, capacity refers to the ability to deliver specified projects timeously and cost effectively. This may read as an extreme characterization, and indeed there are many gradations, but the gist remains – capacity is the ability to deliver specified products, often according to others’ specifications.

If we view ourselves as important and viable ‘organs of civil society’, players whose role is to work towards Islamic transformation, towards redress, towards a better deal for the Muslim community. As such, here we are really talking about building robust and sustainable organizations which are capable of sovereign focus and direction, of strategising and innovation, of responding with flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances, and of acting decisively to impact on, and change, our circumstances and context.

7.2 Acquisition of Skills

The next step in the march towards organizational capacity, in terms of priority and sequence, is the growth and extension of individual skills and abilities and competencies – the traditional terrain of training courses. Of course skills also feature earlier; they can, in and of themselves, generate confidence and a sense of control. Development cannot be viewed simplistically; these phases overlap. Yet what emerges clearly from research is that there a sequence, a hierarchy, and an order. Unless organizational capacity has been developed sufficiently to harness training and acquisition of new skills, training courses do not ‘take’, and skills do not adhere. The organization which does not know where it is going and why; which has a poorly developed sense of responsibility for itself; and which is inadequately structured, cannot make use of training courses and skills acquisition.

8. Partnerships – Networking

NGOs must involve the community in their activities. Those NGOs that have actively involved the community in their projects have a higher success rate. In this process the
community becomes self-reliant, the self-esteem is raised, their skills improve and their sense of ownership of the projects is reinforced. People participate when they feel a sense of community; see their involvement as a process of self-improvement.

Other levels of partnership with other NGOs, private sector, donor agencies and government must be encouraged at all levels. The idea of partnership creates greater synergy, pooling of resources and avoids costly duplication.

MNGOs must engage all these groups to forge stronger links with them and establish healthy working relationships over a period of time. This will lead to greater access to resources facilitating the speedier and efficient delivery of resources.

Another related concept is networking – establish a wide range of networks with other groups so as to share information, ideas, resources and contacts, which will help to realise common objectives.

The NGO must be able to mobilize volunteers if it pursues a strong partnership relationship with the community. Most MNGOs have a very poor reservoir of volunteers as they see themselves as ‘doing the work’ for the community and not with the community.

9. Community Empowerment

A critical element of community development relates to empowerment – mobilizing and organizing individual, grass roots and community organizations and institutions, and enabling them to take action, influence and make decisions on critical issues.

Empowerment takes place at three levels: the (1) individual, (2) organization or group and (3) community.

MNGOs must be seen to be ‘empowering’ communities for effective community development to take place.

10. Impact Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

All projects should be monitored and evaluated with the community so that the community will learn to appraise a project and learn from the success of shortcomings of the project. This will enable to improve on future projects. An impact assessment will also determine whether the objectives fit the need and whether the objectives are being met and if not.
they require revision.

11. Sustainable Development

The new buzz word in community development is 'sustainable development' which refers to the effective utilization of resources with minimum wastage, increased efficiency and to think of future generations to come.

For MNGOs the availability of resources is a major problem. One of the key issues that international NGOs should be focussing on is the issue of sustainable funding viz. issue of Awqaf. With the shrinkage of resources MNGOs have to optimise the utilization of resources and create new sources of sustainable funding. The institution of Awqaf is a legacy of the Islamic value system, which needs to be urgently revived.

12. Relief vs. Development

MNGOs must balance the distribution of resources between relief and development; in fact greater resources need to be shifted to development projects. Relief projects only satisfy the immediate crisis and do not lead do any form of development.

13. Conclusion

The credo devised by James Yen in the 1920s to guide Rural Reconstruction Movement is China may help to redefine our approaches.

Go to the people
Live among the people
Learn form the people
Plan with the people
Work with the people
Start with what people know
Build on what the people know
Teach by showing, learn by doing
Not a showcase but a pattern
Not odds and ends but a system
Not a piecemeal but an integrated approach
Not to conform but to transform
Not relief but release.

Muslims communities in Africa have been largely left to fend form themselves, this paper highlights the need for greater attention to be give to these communities. International NGOs from member countries need to develop a clear vision for their involvement in these countries.

I call upon all the IMNGOs to set up an Africa Forum that will serious look at networking between all the agencies involve in Africa so that a holistic vision and a well defined strategic plan is rolled out for the development of Muslim communities Africa. This Africa Forum must set up an Organizations Development Consultancy that will service MNGOs in developing effective and professional organizations. This is a clarion call and must be addressed urgently if we are serious about preserving, promoting, and developing Muslim communities in Africa.

May Allah bless us and help us in our planning and efforts to make the Ummah a blessing to humanity just as the Prophet (SAW) was, and still is, a blessing to mankind. We have to have faith, a vision, and a sense of struggle.

Allahu Alam
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