

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into on September 18, 2006 in Herndon, Virginia, between the International Institute of Islamic Thought (address: 500 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia, 20170), and herein referred to as IIT; and the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (address: 1156 15th Street N.W., Suite 910, Washington DC, 20005), and herein referred to as ICRD.

Whereas IIT and ICRD share a deep and genuine concern over the state of education in many parts of the Muslim world; and

Whereas both IIT and ICRD share a conviction that religious imperatives could play a constructive role in shaping policy and in preventing conflicts; and

Whereas the two organizations are already involved in activities and projects aimed at harnessing the positive role of religion and religious leaders in addressing the root causes of conflicts, particularly as they relate to education in Muslim countries, and have an interest and desire to expand the scope and reach of such activities.

It is hereby agreed that IIT and ICRD will work together in facilitating the enhancement of educational polices, regulations and institutions in selected Muslim countries. The major purpose of such reform is to help create a better future for Muslim children in a more stable and prosperous Muslim society while contributing – through these same efforts – to the enhancement of peace and security at the global level.

Strategically, the two organizations will work together towards:

- 1) Creating a new synergy between religion and peacemaking through the exchange of ideas and experiences between Muslim scholars and religious leaders from Muslim countries and their counterparts in the United States and Europe, and**
- 2) Reforming the traditional religious schools – or Madrasas – in the Muslim world (particularly in those countries of significance to global peace) for the purpose of producing graduates who are equipped with the skills needed for the betterment of their own lives and for the development of their countries.**
- 3) Making a systemic effort to reform Islamic education consistent with its extraordinary accomplishments of the past so that universities and other Islamic institutions will produce enlightened Muslim scholars and graduates who are well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to face the challenges of modern society.**

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- 4) **Encouraging reform of the public school systems in Muslim countries through greater investment in public education by governments, better training for teachers, curriculum development, formation of government-sponsored model schools and encouragement of private formal education.**
- 5) **Developing funding strategies to support the above that focus on the different stakeholders in Muslim and other countries, governmental as well as non-governmental.**

The major areas of emphasis and collaboration will be:

- 1) **Policy and institutional reform: This will encompass the basic philosophy of education, the legislative and regulatory frameworks, the institutional structures, and environmental factors such as culture, ethnicity and religion.**
- 2) **Curriculum development: This will involve incorporating contemporary subjects into the educational process, with a particular emphasis on the physical sciences and the social sciences, including foreign languages, world affairs, human rights, and the promotion of a culture of tolerance and respect for the "other."**
- 3) **Teacher Training: This will involve improving the training functions through the enhancement of teacher training colleges and other training vehicles at different levels and in different fields of education.**
- 4) **Capacity Building: This will include the strengthening and modernization of existing institutions such as Islamic universities and institutions through the introduction of modern techniques of teaching and learning and the improvement of the physical environment at these institutions.**
- 5) **Exchange Programs: This will include visits by scholars, religious leaders and experts from relevant fields from Muslim countries to the United States and vice versa.**

The approaches that the two organizations adopt may include:

- 1) **joint programs with government institutions, universities and research centers, regional and international organizations, foundations and non-government entities in Muslim and other countries;**
- 2) **direct support through funding, training programs, professional advice, curriculum development, textbooks, computer software and hardware and other forms of material and technical support;**


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- 3) indirect methods such as informing legislators, policy makers, opinion leaders and politicians through seminars, workshops, briefings, policy analyses and private meetings;
- 4) publication and distribution of books, journals, conference proceedings and research papers;
- 5) networking between scholars, religious leaders and institutions active in education and other related fields; and
- 6) building indigenous capacity to enhance self- reliance – financial and otherwise - among the institutions the two organizations choose to help.


For purposes of action planning, follow-up and evaluation, the two organizations will form a joint committee that will meet periodically and that may form other subcommittees to undertake specified functions.

**AGREED TO AND SIGNED ON THIS DAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006
BY**

Signature:


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