



CoEJ Madrasah Leaders Retreat Full Report

Date: 17th October 2015



The Council of European Jamaats

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Registered Charity in the UK No: 1096111

Date: 17th October 2015

Venue: Harben House, Severn Drive, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes, MK16 9EY

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Objectives of the CoEJ Madrasah Leaders Retreat

1. To develop a CoEJ strategy on WF MCE work-streams
2. To create the infrastructure for collaborative working between CoEJ Madaris including:
 - a. Networking
 - b. Sharing of best practice
 - c. Highlight and address challenges faced by Madaris
 - d. Create a developmental plan for Madaris
3. To understand the diverse needs of each CoEJ Madrasah
4. Brief Madaris on the current work of the CoEJ madrasah team
5. Consult Madaris on CoEJ response to David Cameron's speech at the Conservative Party Conference on registration and inspection of religious teaching institutions



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Agenda for the CoEJ Madrasah Leaders Retreat

ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION

Qur'an recitation and reflection

Welcome, Introductions and Scene Setting

Madaris Share Best Practice

BREAK

Madaris' diverse needs and challenges

The current work of the CoEJ Madrasah Team

SALAH AND NETWORKING LUNCH

CoEJ Strategy for WF MCE Work-streams

CoEJ Infrastructure for Madaris (1)

BREAK

CoEJ Infrastructure for Madaris (2)

Consult Madaris on CoEJ response to David Cameron's speech

Closing Remarks



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Background

This group of Madrasah Leaders were brought together as an outcome of discussions with individual Madaris over the past few years. There was perceived to be significant value in being able to liaise, network and share information with each other, and to proactively plan for the future.

Participant Expectations of the Day

Participants were asked to write out in advance their expectations of the Retreat. These were shared with the group, and are summarised below.

Sharing Best Practices

- Open discussion of sharing best practices
- Meet other Madrasah helpers to share best practice and improve practices
- Learning about various practices from different Madrasahs
- Take away one thing that works, make it happen and watch it succeed
- Learn about the initiative being embarked upon by other Madaris
- Learn how others run their Madrasahs and how they tackle similar challenges.

Syllabus

- Have a clear understanding of the MCE Syllabus and know the timelines towards completion of lessons/ schemes of work
- A new syllabus which can cater to the needs of the new generation and the training of teachers on their syllabus

Resources and Collaboration

- Structure: understanding the way forward
- To coordinate with other Madrasahs
- Ability to tap into pool of resources that can give teachers confidence that their lessons would be of value.
- European objectives we can all work towards
- Work as a unified body where CoEJ Madaris work together as a unit
- Having better links with other Madaris
- How Madaris can work together. The work CoEJ can do to drive and support Madrasah program



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Facing Challenges

- Guidelines for working with special needs
- Ideas and strategies to help facilitate the improvement of the Madrasah
- Hear of new challenges faced by other Madaris
- Go away with some answers to the challenges our Madaris face
- How to guide teachers to manage a range of abilities/special needs
- Attendance levels, while not casting away anyone, yet making progress in class-particularly early years.
- How other Madaris are dealing with the wall of social issues we face and are doing better than us so that we can learn



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What does it mean to be Purposeful or Purposeless?

PURPOSEFUL	PURPOSELESS
Aim and Objectives	No aim and objectives
	No vision
Processes to get things done	No process
Adding value	Not adding value
Adequate staff	No adequate staff
Good management	Poor management
Make an impact	Not making an impact
Not warming the chairs	Just warming the chair
Organised	
Proactive	Reactive
Good use of funding	Misuse of funding
Achieving	Demotivated/ not sustainable
Self-motivated	
Buy in	
Vision	



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Propose of the CoEJ Madrasah Infrastructure

Group Contributions for “The Purpose of the CoEJ Madrasah Infrastructure”

- A supportive and cohesive organisation that acts as a channel of communication amongst European Madaris and other organisations, extracting (sharing) and disseminating best practice.
- A supportive European body which serves its Madaris in their developmental journey to share best practices to each individual person.
- To engender uniformity by collaborating in a resourceful manner whilst retaining flexibility of the individuality of the individual Madaris, increasing communication and PR to showcase value add
- To streamline, support and ensure the ship of knowledge sails smoothly through time saving by collaboration and unity, allowing for time to feed into support groups and network between Madaris.
- Create a community, share best practices, serve a community, singing from the same hymn sheet, European based ideas, non-invasive. Support-systems support and financial support. Supports its community of Madrasahs.
- To provide an inclusive support network connecting and guiding Madaris

Final Purpose Statement for Approval by CoEJ EC:

To collaboratively serve, support and add value to European Madaris



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Retreat Suggestions for the Work of the CoEJ Madrasah Infrastructure

The participants were then asked to consider a possible set of actions or projects that this Infrastructure should undertake. The following is an overview of some of the fantastic solutions provided:

Collaboration

- Annual conference with all European Madaris
- Informal visits of each Madrasah
- Topic-based conference calls or meet-ups

Online Information

- Online lessons (MOOC-format)
- Core data for Teachers, Parents, Admin and Students
- MCE information with related learning resources
- Lesson summaries
- Feedback on MCE lessons

Aalim Engagement

- "Ask an Aalim" forum
- Access to Aalim resources in a timely manner
- Have regular content produced by Ulemaa

Skills

- Create localised programme with Champions at each Madrasah
- Assist individual Madaris with implementation of MCE system

Structure

- Make funding available for equipment, resources and personnel
- Create a representative of the European Madaris



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MCE Feedback

The Madrasah Leaders were given an overview of the current work of The World Federation MCE Team by Br Naushad Mehrali. The group were then invited to pose critical questions to Br Naushad for any clarifications. After this, the group gave their feedback on the MCE plans and processes.

POSITIVES	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Already in use, works well - Training programme beneficial - Quranic aspect of the curriculum - Enjoyed teaching the lessons - Differentiation really good - Teacher skills programme helpful - Clear direction - Stringent process - Holistic and learner centric programme - Curriculum harmonising and unity - Engaging lessons - Lesson plans with resources - Positive experience - Fantastic syllabus - Improved structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locality based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. teacher training b. language - Teaching guides required - Joint classes teaching - Ensure right people attending training - Gap in communication- regarding roll-out process - Teacher training specific to integrated teaching model - Ensure infrastructure in place when rolled out - More pressure on teachers therefore requires teacher development - PR to manage change - Principles of each Madrasah to be taken on the journey throughout - Needs to remain current - Managing crowd sourced content - Managing resistance of people who make final decisions



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Emailed Suggestions for the Name of a CoEJ Madrasah Infrastructure

Each participant was contacted and were asked to suggest names for the creation of this CoEJ Madrasah Development Infrastructure. The responses are shared below:

- ◆ United European Madaris
- ◆ ILM
 - Islamic Learning Management
 - Institute of Learning Management
 - Islamic Learning and Madaris
- ◆ Madaris Support Desk
- ◆ Madaris Central Politbureau
- ◆ Madaris Central Agency
- ◆ CHILD – Centre for Holistic Increased Lifelong-learning and Development

We would like to further engage the Madaris further on refining this name, giving them ownership over the process and output. CoEJ OBs will seek the approval of the CoEJ EC to delegate the authority of naming this Infrastructure to Madaris themselves before doing so.



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CoEJ EC Approvals for 20th December 2015

1. To approve the creation of a CoEJ Madrasah Development Infrastructure
2. To approve the creation of a CoEJ Madrasah Development Fund
3. To approve the delegation of naming the CoEJ Madrasah Development Infrastructure to the CoEJ Madaris
4. To approve that CoEJ is to work with the Madrasah Leaders Group to create a 5-year Workplan within the Purpose Statement



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Raw Data – All Group Ideas for Work of the CoEJ Madrasah Infrastructure

- More interaction with all Madrasah
- Conference call on specific topics
- Annual meeting with all Madaris
- Informal forum for more interaction (visits)
- Base information for all Madaris to access
- Create a board of scholars who will provide a quarterly output of info of relevance to admin and teachers

- Collaboration
 - European
 - Intranet (App)
 - Pooling

- Funding
 - Resources
 - Learning Environment
 - H.R (Committed)
 - Equipment

Main

- Creating a forum and providing regular opportunities for sharing best practices (online and face-to-face)
 - MK did a Ramadhan open day for mainstream schools
- Train up staff as facilitators from each Jamaat so they can provide trainings at their Madrassah
- Facilitation of focus groups; visits and observations of different Madrassahs.
- Communication ex: a group between all present to continue discussions and be kept up to date



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- Help us bridge the gap between our communities and the MCB (if the MCB has involvement in Madaris of other sects)
- Provide localised, in-house training (start buy-in and gets staff to see value)

Create a resource hub to enable everybody to use it and contribute to it.

- Staff forum: Madaris/MCE/Admin/ Teachers/ Parents
- MCE forum containing a resource hub.
- Lesson summary portal? Q + A

COEJMCE.COM

- Online lessons
- New ideas
- Lesson summaries
- Resource hub
- Inter-Madaris Forum: Teacher
- Moderators
- Parent portal
- Q+A Ask an Alim?

- Send a team of representatives to each Madrasah to assist in the implementation of the integrated curriculum.
- Creating an interactive board which updates and informs Madaris of the innovations and facilitates discussion about the changes.

Outcomes (Draft)

- Harmonizing Islamic Education through local engagement
 - Spiritual/ Spirituality
 - Enhance/ nurture
 - Self-development
 - To share, guide, engage, integrated
 - Driving/leading- bringing people up, motivating/encouraging, levelling the playing field
 - Communicate



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- Representative of the Madaris

Create a recognition of importance by:

Increasing awareness; Road trip, 'One Team', 'Support, Support, Support'

- Linking
 - Champions
 - Events- teachers, students, EC and Madrasah Management

Through this

- Automatically best practice may be shared
- Needs will be seen and solutions found
- Develop year on year progress plans



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CoEJ Madrasah Leaders Retreat Participants

Madrasah Name	Participant Names	
Zainabiya Madrasah of Märsta	Hassanain Govani	
Trollhatten	Laith Hussain Shaikh Safder Razi	Mohammad Kazim Master
Husayni Madrasah (Mahfil Ali)	Fatema Sunderji Kumail Versi	Ammar Asaria
Baab-UI-Ilm (Leeds)	Arifa Bhamani Zahir Walji	Mawlana Nurul Hassan
Leicester	Sukaina Fazal Hasnain Karim	Sidika Raza
Shia Ithna'asheri Madressa (Hujjat)	Aamir Jiwa Sajjad Govani Maisam Jaffer Shenaz Dhalla Fatim Panjwani	Mukhtar Karim Raza Kirmani Hasnain Merali Shiraz Jiwa
Muhammadi Madrasah (Birmingham)	Hasnain Panjwani Sajjad Hassam Shabir Jivraj	Sajida Thaver Yasmeen Meghji Faiza Mawji
Milton Keynes	Taslim Bandali Husein Dewji	Hassanain Kara
Essex	Saira Haji	
Wessex	Rubaina Mulla Shahik Mulla	Fatima Somji
Peterborough	Shehnaz Dharas	
Hyderi	Mariam Hassam Shaina Jadavji Mazaher Remtulla	Ayman Jeraj Qassim Alidina
Paris South	Shamira Badouraly	Zeinab Goulamaly
Paris North	Nassir Charifou	
Facilitators	Dr. Akber Mohamedali Aly Nasser Abbas Khaku Kulsum Asaria	Masuma Jaffer Sukaina Merchant Zainab Rashid



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Overall Achievements and Challenges

Below is a list of achievements and challenges that the Madaris across Europe have mentioned. This particular list was not part of the original document sent to the Executive Council but has been added for your own reference and learning.

Achievements

- The Madaris on the continent have been making good progress with getting the students more familiar with the English resources
- There has been great emphasis on learning Quran and the number of students now reciting Quran properly has increased
- Having material that has been produced locally, replicated in other regions like Canada
- Having a regular Sports Day
- Teaching Salaah as part of the curriculum
- Interactive style of teaching
- Encouraging Critical Thinking amongst students
- Having a student representative system which empowers students to organise lectures and create the end of year magazine
- Managing teachers effectively
- Investing in an efficient and refined IT system to manage administration
- Having homework diaries to include verse of the week among other things
- Introducing Student Welfare Officers to look after the student's wellbeing

Challenges

- Struggling with getting parents involved in their child's learning process
- Trying to recruit volunteers and a lack of them has also been a concern shared
- Low and/or inconsistent attendance particularly amongst teenagers
- Trying to develop and modernise the curriculum
- Keeping the content relevant
- Dealing with a lack of space
- Differences in cultures
- Lack of discipline amongst students in terms of the dress code and behaviour
- Lack of teacher training in terms of knowledge (content as opposed to process)