

## Annual Review 2009

### Welcome

Today, more than ever, the humanitarian community needs to work together. Around the world humanitarian needs continue to grow as countries fall victim to natural disasters and conflict. And yet at the same time it seems that the gap between different communities is growing ever wider. Each of these communities has different skills, resources and perspectives. Each of these communities can benefit from knowing more about the work of the others - whether organisations are Multilateral, Western, Islamic or Southern.

Unfortunately it seems that despite the common bonds that unite us all, tensions, suspicion and divisions are rife. In this climate The Humanitarian Forum is in a unique position to act as a bridge between Western and Islamic humanitarian organisations.

As a unique family of internationally based organizations, we're committed to improving relationships between humanitarian actors, eradicating prejudice and creating understanding between communities. We improve the lives of those in need, and relations between communities, through bridge building and quality humanitarian action both internationally and locally in a global network of peers.

None of us can be effective if we work in isolation. And we know things don't change overnight; understanding and partnerships take time to build. But internationally and in our pilot countries, we've demonstrated the positive impact that co-operation and dialogue bring. The Humanitarian Forum was born in the fear after 9/11 and the devastation of the Asian Tsunami – proof that even at the darkest times we can work for hope and rehabilitation.

A wide range of actors came together from June 2004 in meetings in the field - and out of these exchanges were born our ambition, core approaches and partner countries. You can read more about these on our website. We were registered as a charity in the UK in 2008, and are proud to present our work in 2009.

A lot has been achieved in a relatively short space of time. But the needs are great and there is much more for us to do. This report highlights some of the Humanitarian Forum's successes and also outlines our priorities for the future.

By continuing to work together and by strengthening our common bonds we know that in the future we can achieve so much more. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the Humanitarian Forum so far and look forward to working with more of our stakeholders in the coming months and years.



**Dr Hany El Banna**  
President



**James Shaw-Hamilton**  
Director

## Programmes overview

**We empower civil society groups at all levels, enabling them to reach their full potential. We create dialogue and understanding between organizations from Muslim countries or denominations, and their Western and multilateral counterparts.**



*At organisational level*, we run workshops and create partnerships with small organisations to increase capacity, accountability and expertise. We provide training, mentoring and coaching in areas like disaster management and finance.

*At national level* we link local organisations to create a strong voice. This is crucial where state capacity is limited, or different communities struggle to cooperate. In Sudan, Yemen, Indonesia and Kuwait, our national forums strengthen the humanitarian sector and facilitate peer learning.

*Internationally*, we develop strong global networks and link humanitarian communities, particularly to deal with emergencies. We convene international and regional conferences where humanitarian and development organisations from different backgrounds meet as equals. Small, often excluded groups add a vital voice to the international dialogue, air concerns and share local expertise. Larger organisations increase their knowledge, understanding and opportunity for effective partnerships.

We work through several core approaches:

- **Providing a safe environment for reaching agreement** – a framework for NGOs from different backgrounds to learn from each other. Through dialogue and shared activities, we build trust between a wide range of organizations: our own international advisory group consists of Sunni, Shia, Western, international and local humanitarian organizations. We're able to debate politically complex issues in a constructive way, such as increased cooperation between Gulf-based and Western organizations responding to humanitarian need in Gaza.
- **Strategic training to help NGOs become good partners** – to internationally recognised standards – through information sharing, peer learning and targeted training. We empower the national forums to assess the needs of the local NGO sector and organise training workshops accordingly. In Kuwait, we've supported key international NGOs to form a local forum, linked to international expertise and the Government to develop a strategic approach to improving NGOs.
- **Ensuring money is well spent** - helping NGOs improve accountability, through regulation and self-regulation. We demystify legal frameworks, and advocate for improvements. We help members improve how they're run, how they manage finances, and how they report to the public.
- **Putting beneficiaries first by promoting humanitarian principles and standards.** We're sharing information and dialogue about Western and Islamic (*insaniyah*) humanitarian principles to demonstrate the shared ideas that these communities have and to strengthen both. We can play a pivotal role linking the NGO community, the international community, the Government and local communities.
- **Improving and building relationships** through communication and facilitating collaboration, especially in emergencies. For the sector to be sustainable, governments, communities and the business sector should have a positive public image of NGOs and of the role they play in society.

## Improving the quality of NGOs

**We improve the lives of those suffering humanitarian or development need by building a community of effective NGOs, in a neutral environment where they can learn from each other to improve their work.**

By improving the quality of NGOs we help those in need. Better NGOs increase the economic and social impact of aid and make better local partners. In our pilot countries, we build quality NGOs and leaders in a sustainable, local process that also builds links between communities. We develop individual leadership, increase organisations' impact and increase the accountability of charitable giving. This gives confidence and helps to build trust.

Where disasters are complex, The Humanitarian Forum or its members may have a comparative advantage: we're developing a series of larger workshops looking at alternative humanitarian operational partnership and engagement in particular emergencies. We bring organizations together from the West/multilateral system, Islamic international NGOs and local NGOs, both secular and Islamic.

This year, we convened a ground-breaking workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss the humanitarian situation in Somalia in October. "This is a very opportune time to talk about Somalia. It poses one of the world's more complex challenges," said Mark Bowden, UN Resident Coordinator. The event cut a path for new opportunities for frank, constructive dialogue between Somali and international humanitarian and development organisations. It brought people together who have never previously met – but must if the situation is to improve. Abdillahi Yusuf, Somalia country director for Oxfam, praised the event, saying "The relationship between Islamic and Western organisations has not been discussed like this before."

In another vital project, we brought together key international and local humanitarian organisations in February in Doha, to discuss the situation in Gaza. It was the first time that such a wide range of organisations had met; NGOs came from Muslim and western countries, and were joined by several multilateral organisations. In all, there were 32 organisations from 12 countries.

On a more international scale, we host or support initiatives on the core approaches. For instance, we've held detailed discussions with the League of Arab States and the Charity Commission to plan a regional conference on NGO regulation for early 2010.

"Local capacity building is fundamental, especially in Somalia where most of the actors are outside Somalia."

- Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Hassan,  
President of the Somali Red Crescent

Meanwhile, in our partner countries we support local forums with organizational development, grants and access to the international community. We also fund Directors in Indonesia and Yemen. In turn, the national forums provide regular training workshops for local NGOs, so that they can tackle the issues most important to their communities at the time. A very recent workshop in Indonesia has dealt with issues of religious understanding and cultural sensitivity in emergency situations. The outcome is disaster diverted: the Humanitarian Forum Indonesia has brought actors from different backgrounds together and has established cultural sharing and dialogue to enable aid to reach the most vulnerable people without misunderstanding between different actors.

"Building the capacity of CSOs should not be done just when we face problems"

- Makki Mohamed, Head of Africa Region, Islamic Relief

## Building bridges

**We build strong bonds between organisations from different communities. These bonds are based on equality, understanding and trust, and are developed by working together to improve others' lives.**

We use the strong common heritage of charitable and humanitarian work as a non-political foundation to build understanding and cooperation between religions, cultures and communities. Through this, we build bridges between traditional and non-traditional actors; in particular between multilateral/western organizations and Islamic international NGOs, and local NGOs.

In our partner countries, we support regular networking between local and international organizations. In April, we arranged for the United Nations' emergencies coordination office (UN OCHA) and Oxfam to lead a workshop in Yemen, exploring ideas for cooperation amongst Yemeni NGOs, and between them and the international community. Also in Yemen, the Charity Commission (the UK's internationally-regarded regulator of NGOs) led a workshop in June exploring NGO accountability to donors, the NGO sector and beneficiaries.

"It's important to organize and maintain a strong dialogue between Islamic based NGOs and the rest of the world. Clearly, Muslim NGOs have a lot to offer in terms of international humanitarian work and we ... need to find ways and means of establishing meaningful partnerships."

- *Matthias Schmale, Under Secretary General Development, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

Turning to Sudan, The Humanitarian Forum convened talks in London in November, following the much-reported expulsion of several international aid agencies from Sudan in March 2009. The Sudanese Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and two senior colleagues from the Sudanese Government met with several international humanitarian agencies in both private meetings and public discussions. It was a vital step forward in negotiations between the Government of Sudan and humanitarian agencies. As Dr Hany El Banna said, "the visit has been a very important bridge building exercise, re-establishing communication ... and enabling trust through dialogue. We are looking to the future of Sudan, and these are the first steps in a new era."



Internationally, we arranged a meeting between experts in Islamic charities and the heads of the world's largest humanitarian organisations (the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response), many of which are Christian. We debated the principles underpinning Islamic humanitarian organizations, the general role of faith-based organisations and the challenges they face. This is a vital conversation: in many disasters the affected populations and organisations responding have diverse religious or cultural origins.

We bridge the gulf between humanitarian organisations in other ways. This year, we've participated at:

- United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (April, Turkey)
- UN DIHAD (April, UAE)
- Clinton Global Initiative (September, USA)
- Global Economic Symposium (September, Germany)
- Organisation of Islamic Conference NGO Forums (various)

Other conferences we've been involved in this year are:

- *Making the Difference: Integrated Approaches to Crises in the Middle East* (June, Belgium)
- *Humanitarian Action in Somalia* (June, UK)
- *Religion, Secularism, and Humanitarianism* (October, Switzerland)
- *Development cooperation in the context of Islam* (December, Germany)

## Global and national networks

**We're developing an international movement by sharing experience and ideas. As a key part of this, we create national forums as a local, sustainable catalyst for ongoing change.**

Our global and national networks create trust. They create valuable connections, sustainable good practice, and a wide range of experience and perspectives. The Humanitarian Forum represents a unique opportunity, combining in a partnership of:

- The credibility and leverage of a network of partner countries and supporters.
- The contacts and sustainability of national groups of NGOs.
- The experience of international NGOs and multilateral organisations.

What we're offering is the chance for humanitarian actors – from small local organisations to international NGOs - to become credible and accountable in each others' eyes, and in the eyes of the beneficiaries they serve. We're showing the benefits of working together and learning from each other.

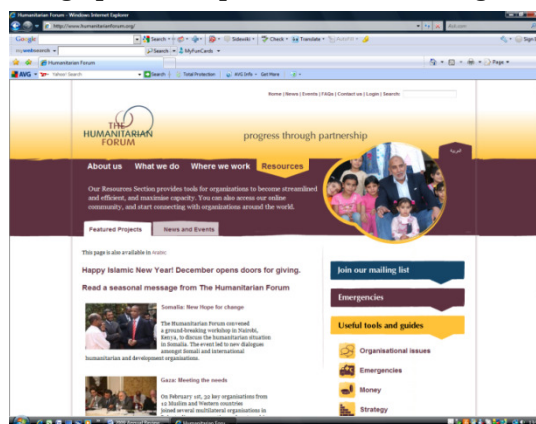
Impartiality and inclusiveness are key. Our Steering Committee is made up of key humanitarian organisations from 14 countries in 4 continents. It has always met "in the field": this year, we met in Turkey (April) and Kenya (October). International networks have been joining us as observers, such as the Organisation for Islamic Conference, the Islamic Development Bank and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.

International efforts are mirrored in our national forums. We're broadening local membership to ensure diverse civil societies are adequately represented, and building bridges between local NGOs and international organizations operational in the country. Through partnerships and consultations, greater dialogue and coordination can be achieved.

The Humanitarian Forum was created for dialogue, support and understanding. Now we want to continue and expand that support online, in an open, accessible space. In doing so, we hope to reach many more communities across the Middle East and worldwide, who, for one reason or another may not currently be benefitting from international support and training.

The website is readable in both Arabic and English, and will be found at [www.humanitarianforum.org](http://www.humanitarianforum.org). It incorporates online discussion boards, so organizations can contact each other and exchange ideas and experience. Over the course of 2010, we'll also be exploring new online media, with the aim of creating easy-to-access, sustainable online discussions and face-to-face support where it doesn't currently exist. We're also planning a series of webinars – online training sessions where carefully chosen experts will be on hand to answer participants' questions directly and lead debate and discussion.

Our website hosts resources to empower organisations, news and updates on our work, as well as information about the regional and international Humanitarian Forums. Over the next few months we'll be working to make this more interactive, empowering our partners in the national forums to bring their project updates and news to a global audience.



## Financial review

The Humanitarian Forum had a good start in a year when much of the UK charity sector was affected by the global financial crisis. We're funded through the contribution of members, private donations and grants, and much of this was received from abroad so we also benefitted from exchange rates variations. Income is steady and expenditure is commensurate with our income. At the same time, the Humanitarian Forum also faces challenges common to many alliances, since part of its income is indirectly related to members' income and it is still building up a track record. Internally, we've agreed a new Strategic Plan. We're also converting to a company limited by guarantee.

During the year the Humanitarian Forum raised £587,898 (2007 – nil) of income and spent £281,168 (2007 - nil), carrying forwards £306,730 to the next financial year.

The Humanitarian Forum spent 82.2% of its total expenditure on charitable activities, 6.4% on fundraising and 11.4% on governance. This proportion will reduce as the Humanitarian Forum and its network become more established, and as its activities grow. We are carrying forwards some income to 2010 to reflect caution about cashflow in the first 2 years.

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total funds*
	Funds £	Funds £	2008-2009 £
<b>INCOME</b>			
<b>Voluntary income</b>			
Members	294,287	20,000	314,287
Foundations	-	30,000	30,000
Private donors	237,714	-	237,714
Other income	5,897	-	5,897
<b>Total</b>	<b>537,898</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>587,898</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Programmes</b>			
International	96,105	12,870	108,975
Partner countries	107,198	20,838	128,036
<b>Other</b>			
Fundraising	16,612	2,148	18,760
Governance	19,423	5,974	25,397
Transfer between funds	4,284	(4,284)	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>239,338</b>	<b>41,830</b>	<b>281,168</b>
Net incoming resources	298,560	8,170	306,730
Transfer between funds	4,284	(4,284)	-
<b>Balance carried forwards</b>	<b>302,844</b>	<b>3,886</b>	<b>306,730</b>

\*These figures are cumulative. They cover our accounts for 21<sup>st</sup> December 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

## Plans for 2010

In 2010, we'll continue to expand our programme delivery and develop the global network.

Improving the quality of NGOs:

- In the partner countries, support regular training of local NGOs by the local forums.
- Host/support 1-2 international conferences on areas related to our core approaches. For example, we're in discussions with the League of Arab States and the Charity Commission about a regional conference on NGO regulation for early 2010. We're working on other conferences related to Islamic humanitarian and development work.
- Ensure the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* reflects Islamic charitable principles and publicise this.
- Continue to develop the website, with discussion groups, resources and new technologies.



Building bridges:

- Organise the quality-building events to maximize the links between humanitarian communities.
- Arrange high-level meetings between western/multilateral organizations and Islamic ones.
- Facilitate training and networking workshops in our partner countries by international experts, such as UN OCHA.

Global and national networks:

- Broaden the range of organisations involved in the global network.
- Develop membership and activities in the partner countries and develop ways to measure success.
- Consider creating forums in new partner countries.
- Sustain and grow funding.

## Board

The Board of Trustees consists of the following individuals:

Dr Hany El Banna	Chairman	founder of Islamic Relief Worldwide
Sir Nicholas Young	Deputy Chairman	British Red Cross
Ibrahim Hassaballah	Treasurer	International Islamic Charitable Organisation
Adam Leach	Secretary	International Business Leaders Forum
Dr Abdulwahab Noorwali		World Assembly of Muslim Youth
Hüseyin Oruc		Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief

## Secretariat

James Shaw-Hamilton	Director
Ghadah Al-Nasseri	PA to Dr Hany el Banna
Claud Mba	eCommunications Manager
Shahira Maarouf	Programme Manager
Soodad al Naib	Office Manager

## Members

 <p>The British Red Cross</p>	 <p>International Islamic Charitable Organisation</p>	 <p>Department for International Development (UK Government)</p>	 <p>Islamic Relief</p>
 <p>Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH)</p>	 <p>World Assembly for Muslim Youth</p>	 <p>Mercy Corps</p>	 <p>Muhhamadiyah Foundation</p>
 <p>Near East Foundation</p>	 <p>Qatar Charity</p>	 <p>Qatar Red Crescent Society</p>	 <p>Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)</p>
 <p>Oxfam Be HumanKind</p> <p>Oxfam</p>	<p>Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation</p>	<p>National Rural Support Program (NRSP)</p>	 <p>United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Standing Invitee)</p>
 <p>International Committee of the Red Cross (Standing Invitee)</p>	 <p>International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Standing Invitee)</p>	 <p>Charity Commission (Standing Invitee)</p>	 <p>ICVA (Standing Invitee)</p>