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Islamic Development Management Project: Managing Development the Islamic Way

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IDMP

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The Islamic Development Management Project (IDMP) was established in 1995 at the School of Social Sciences, University of Science Malaysia. As a research and education project, which gathers its members from various disciplines and schools within the University, IDMP aims at enhancing the field of Islamic development beyond the confines of development per se. It takes a multi-disciplinary approach to development, integrating social, economic and political tools of analysis to understand development in an integrative and holistic manner.

The IDMP goes beyond the study of Islamic economics, Islamic development and Islamic economic development to scrutinize and construct a conceptual and practical framework of the management of economics, development, and economic development in an Islamic perspective. As development is seen as an all-embracing aspect of life, from spiritual to material and physical, and from the level of the individual to that of society, state and beyond, IDMP intends to cover the whole range of horizons of human life, formulating and pioneering a new integrated discipline that IDMP terms 'Islamic Development Management'.

► **Professor Khurshid Ahmad delivering concluding remarks at the First International Conference on Islamic Development Management organized by the IDMP-IDB.**

Activities

In realizing the above objectives, IDMP undertakes the task of strengthening its members with knowledge of Islam and related disciplines, as well as disseminating this knowledge through weekly Qur'anic studies, monthly in-house seminars, academic meetings, international conferences (every two years), research, publications and teaching. While Qur'anic studies, in-house seminars and academic meetings comprise regular gatherings for IDMP members and interested individuals to share and deepen their knowledge on subjects related to Islam and Islamic Development Management, the international conferences bring IDMP members and international learned persons together to present and exchange their ideas and research findings on a chosen theme.

The IDMP has, for nearly two years now, conducted its weekly Qur'anic studies classes, organized numerous in-house seminars, two academic meetings and three international conferences. The first academic meeting, a seminar on *An Islamic Approach to Development Management* was held in Kota Bharu, Kelantan in 1998; while the second, a book discussion on Napoleon and Islam was held at University Science Malaysia in 1999.¹ The first two international conferences, held in 1994 and 1996, dealt with Islamic political economy.² The third, held in 1998 and co-organized with the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) of the Islamic Development Bank, dealt with the *Management of Economic Development in Islamic Perspective*. Currently, IDMP is preparing for its fourth international conference to be held in the very near future. The emphasis of this conference will be placed on the conceptualization and realization of Islamic Development Management within the socio-economic and political realities of today.

During the second international conference held in 1996, the first IDMP book, consisting of papers presented at the first international conference³ was launched. The third international conference³ held in 1998, saw the appearance of three other books written and edited by IDMP members.⁴ IDMP is now editing the papers of this conference to be published in one volume, as well as simultaneously editing a book based on the seminar on development management held in Kelantan. At the official opening of the 1998 conference, a memorandum of understanding

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PHOTO: IDMP, UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA.

To date, the IDMP has enjoyed cooperation with various institutions in organizing its in-house seminars, academic meetings, international conferences and publications. It hopes to continue such cooperation, taking it further to include the training of its members, and by being involved in coordinated efforts and activities both at the national and international levels. ◆

Notes

1. The 'Seminar on Development Management: An Islamic Approach' was co-organized with the Association of Kelantan Civil Servants while the 'Book Discussion: *Napoleon and Islam*' (by Christian Cherfils, Utusan Publications and Distributors, 1999) was co-organized with Utusan Publications and Distributors.
2. The first international conference on 'Islamic Political Economy in Capitalist Globalization: An Agenda for Change' was co-organized with the Institut Kajian Dasar (IKD, Kuala Lumpur) while the second, on 'Islamic Political Economy: Methodology and Practice from an Asian Perspective in Response to Globalization', was co-organized with the Secretariat for Islamic Philosophy and Science (Penang), Yayasan Nurul Yaqeen (Kuala Lumpur) and the Japan Asia Foundation (Tokyo).
3. The book, edited by M.A. Choudhury, Abdad M.Z. and Muhammad Syukri Salleh, is entitled *Islamic Political Economy in Capitalist Globalization: An Agenda for Change*, and was published by Utusan Publications and Distributors, 1996.
4. The books, all published by Utusan Publications and Distributors, are *Political Economy of Development in Malaysia* (edited by B.N. Ghosh and Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 1999); *Foreign Workers in Malaysia: Issues and Challenges* (by A.H.M. Zehadul Karim, Moha Asri Abdullah and Md Isa Bakar, 1999); and *Pembangunan Industri Kecil dan Sederhana di Malaysia* (by Moha Asri Abdullah, 1999).
5. The two theses were entitled: 'Pondok Pesantren Cooperatives in Sumatera Utara' (PhD) and 'Administration of Waqf Land in Medan, Indonesia' (MA). The on-going research consists of the following themes: 'Agriculture Financing: A Comparative Study between Conventional and Islamic Systems'; 'The Link between Bay' Al-Salam as an Islamic Mode of Financing and Instruments of the Agricultural Investment Sector in the Light of Islamic Economics'; 'Development Perspective of Gerakan Muhammadiyah in Indonesia' (for MA degrees); 'Islamic Finance for Small and Medium Entrepreneurs in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia'; 'In Search of a Truly Interest-Free Financial System'; and 'Zakat Accounting: The Cases of Some Selected Islamic Institutions in Malaysia' (for PhD degrees).

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was signed with Utusan Publications & Distributors on the publication of an IDMP bi-annual *Journal of Islamic Development*.

The above activities run concurrently with research and consultancy works. To date, IDMP has completed two research projects, firstly on the 'Islamization of Development in Kelantan' and secondly on the 'Implementation of Islamic Development: A Comparative Analysis of Kelantan and Terengganu'. At the moment IDMP is carrying out two other research projects on the 'Commercialization of Agriculture' and 'Management of Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia'. It has also begun consultancy work for the Higher Education Department of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, investigating the 'Entrance of Religious Studies Students into the Public Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia'.

As IDMP has yet to have its own teaching programme, it utilizes the present structure of the university to teach undergraduate courses and supervise post-graduate students. Undergraduate courses on 'Islamic Economics' and 'Islamic Economics Analysis' are taught within the Economic Section of the School of Social Sciences and School of Distance Learning, respectively. Two other courses - 'Principles and Implementation of Islamic Development' and 'Islamic Development Institutions' - are taught within the Development Planning and Management Section of the School of Social Sciences. At the post-graduate level, a master's degree in Social Sciences and a PhD degree have been completed by two students from the School of Social Sciences. At present, three students are preparing their master's degrees and three for their PhD degrees.⁵

Plans for the future

At this time, the IDMP merely exists as a project under the School of Social Sciences. Although it receives basic office facilities and enjoys moral support from the School, the IDMP is actually a self-sponsored project, financially independent of both the School and the university. A formal status within the organizational structure of the university

such as a centre or institute (and perhaps a school in the future) would help create a more encouraging and active future for the IDMP. It would bring IDMP members who come from various schools and fields together into one formal institution, researching, developing and disseminating the Islamic Development Management discipline through their respective fields, such as Islamic Economics, Islamic Development, Islamic Management, Islamic Politics, Islamic Political Economy and so on. All these could culminate in a practical, applied living Islam. As such, achieving a formal status for the IDMP within the organizational structure of the university is a main objective for the coming years.

The IDMP also aims at formulating academic packages to be offered to both undergraduate and post-graduate students. Specific academic programmes, such as a major and minor in Islamic Development Management for undergraduates, as well as a master's programme and PhD programme, are in the planning pipeline. As an initial step, a proposal has been made for the master's and minor programmes in Islamic Development Management, to be launched during the Eighth Malaysia Plan, 2001-2005. Offering such programmes would not only enrich the discipline of Islamic Development Management, but would also hopefully be able to expedite the implementation of Islamic development in various Muslim countries, through the training of their Islamic development managers at IDMP.

The way forward

The IDMP would not be able to accomplish its objectives without the cooperation, support and acknowledgement of the University Science Malaysia, as well as without that of established institutions worldwide. Being a project that depends, for its day-to-day operations, on research and consultancy grants, continual assistance in goods, services and monetary forms from established organizations and philanthropists would greatly help IDMP to advance at a greater pace.