

SUMMARY OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING
“GLOBAL MUSLIM PHILANTHROPY FUND FOR CHILDREN”Agenda

Moderator - Mr. Basit Khan, Faith Based Giving Consultant, UNICEF

	Speaker
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Opening Remarks	<i>Dr. Ahmed Al Meraikhi, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General</i>
An introduction to the GMPFC	<i>Mr. Abdel Rahman Ghandour, Senior Advisor UNICEF</i>
Establishing the Fund & Being a Trustee	<i>Mr. Syed Husain Quadri , Acting Director of Resilience and Social Development Department, Islamic Development Bank</i>
First Strategic Partner	<i>Dr. Sonia ben Jaafar, CEO Al Ghurair Foundation for Education</i>
Personal Experience: how zakat can change a life	<i>Ms. Muzoon Almellehan, UNICEF Global Ambassador</i>
Pilot Programme & Beneficiaries	<i>Ms. Tanya Chapuisat, UNICEF Jordan Representative</i>
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Seminar Summary**Welcome - Dr. Ahmed Al Meraikhi, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General**

In the fifth seminar, we are going to be discussing a distinctive model in the implementation of Islamic social finance. One of the success stories is the partnership between the Islamic Development Bank and one of the United Nations organizations, UNICEF. We look forward to benefiting from these experiences and for them be a model on which we can build an international mechanism to help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Islamic social finance.

We thank the Islamic Development Bank and ESCWA for their efforts in making this initiative a success, which we hope will achieve the goal for which it was set, that is to achieve sustainable development for people who desperately need to live in dignity.

The existence of organized work between several partners, whether these partners are humanitarian organizations, governments or private sector companies, where each of them contributes with its unique expertise and technical know-how to the achievement of common goals and overcoming obstacles is more efficient and powerful than individual work.

Multi-stakeholder partnership is an essential opportunity to learn from other actors and advance the goals set, whether it is economic development, social development, poverty eradication and relief



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campaigns by harnessing the creative power of the various actors and benefiting from their expertise and know-how.

It also encourages partnerships between multiple stakeholders, by taking urgent and cost-effective measures to overcome difficulties and crises. The realization of these partnerships requires the provision of logistical services, immediate and stable contacts with all actors and workers in the humanitarian field. The coordination and quality mechanisms and the contexts of joint programs and initiatives brings benefit and growth to the community. The strategic partnership between humanitarian and charitable institutions, as well as multiple stakeholders, has become one of the most important pillars on which humanitarian and charitable work is based. With the development of “human thought”, it has become a necessary culture for the development of poor communities.

In our seminar today we look at *The Global Muslim Philanthropy Fund for Children* in which a group of specialists from the Islamic Development Bank and UNICEF participate. There will be a presentation about the successful partnership between the two parties, which is a distinctive model for success. We also look forward to a fruitful discussion by asking questions.

Mr. Abdel Rahman Ghandour, Senior Advisor UNICEF

Islamic giving and charitable action has existed since the birth of Islam and particularly has been important in addressing issues for orphans, children and education, but more can be done. Firstly, we need more structured institutions to maximise impact. More global coordination with measurable metrics, ability to scale and increased visibility. We must be more strategic.

The IsDB President and UNICEF Executive Director established the GMPFC in 2019. There have also been two very important donors Al Ghuraur Foundation and KS Relief to help kick start programmes in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Jordan. This is just the start but the mechanisms of the fund have been established and now we are moving into the operational phase which includes identifying new projects – including in Palestine and supporting the covid-19 response - and reaching out to new potential donors.

The GMPFC is committed to co-constructing an ecosystem that promotes regional strategic philanthropy. The GMPFC is committed to enable philanthropists and donors to collaborate and work together to have a greater joint impact while respecting their individual priorities. The GMPFC is committed to nurturing cross sectoral local, regional and international partnerships and collaborations with donors and to promote homegrown approaches for solutions that work for local communities and give them the dignity and respect that Islamic giving promotes.

Mr. Syed Husain Quadri, Acting Director of Resilience and Social Development Department, Islamic Development Bank

Zakat is not only a requirement but it is also considered a right and a consistent form of social financing. IsDB through the GMPFC is uniquely situated because it has all of the legal, compliance, organisational structure requirements in place to be a trustee for zakat monies. Similarly, UNICEF has an unmatched track record of addressing the needs of children in hard to reach places. Coupled with longstanding partners in KSRelief and Al Ghurair Education Foundation the GMPFC is well placed to



leverage the social financing of both zakat and sadaqah to help children globally. When zakat is framed in accordance with core Islamic precepts and principles as it should be, it is aligned with the sustainable development goals because it already includes helping the poor and the needy – the displaced and most vulnerable – to become self-sustaining. Transformation of Islamic compliant social financing mechanisms into recognised funding instruments in line with promoting sustainability is a priority.

Dr. Sonia ben Jaafar, CEO Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

The central tenet of Islam is giving and it is part of who Muslims are. As a first supporter of the GMPFC, the Al Ghurair Foundation is looking for ways to make a bigger impact and harnessing the power of Islamic financing to do that. This means a new strategic way of thinking that takes people out of poverty and lays the foundation for prosperity. One example, is a woman who got an education from a programme funded by the GMPFC. She now has a degree and a job where she is able to now contribute back to the community by giving zakat and sadaqah. This is sustainable Islamic financing in action. SDGs 4, 9 and 17 are reflected in the GMPFC which provides an alternative for the global youth to become empowered instead of becoming charity.

Collaborating with regional development partners means that the GMPFC can make use of the experiences of others to make more sustainable investments in communities. This helps to become more proactive rather than just responding to immediate needs as the GMPFC wants to really build programmes that create foundations and have long-term impact. This is achieved through the lean infrastructure that the GMPFC is able to use because it is a mechanism of Islamic social financing that is not overburdened by bureaucracy.

There is less inflow of pledges from traditional donors to developing countries and it is true that reaching the vulnerable is becoming more difficult, but it is also true that in Islamic giving there are financing mechanisms to provide the most vulnerable populations with long term support and opportunities that can be linked to the sustainable development goals.

His Excellency Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair - has not only committed his money to this fund but he's committed his time, his thinking, his insights because he is passionate about providing opportunities to better the livelihoods of Arab and Muslim youth as well as mobilize others to do the same. It is part of his family legacy as is the case with a multitude of philanthropist in the Arab region and beyond.

Ms. Tanya Chapuisat, UNICEF Jordan Representative

Jordan faces increased challenges for children and it was awarded the first grant from the GMPFC which was used to target young women and men. The Makani ('My Space' in Arabic) centres in Jordan provide a safe space for children and young people to access learning opportunities, child protection and other critical services. Makani centres play a key role in identifying children who are facing challenges to enroll in education and referring them to UNICEF and the Ministry of Education for enrollment in formal and non-formal education. In 2021, there are 140 Makani centres in Jordan operating inside refugee camps, host communities and informal tented settlements. In 2019, the Al



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Ghurair Foundation supported the Makani centres through the GMPFC which meant it could continue to provide services to approximately 10,000 children. This support continued into 2021 and now we have been able to access 4,000-4,200 children who have gone through the centres.

This funding has also been able to support a cash transfer to help vulnerable families ensure that their children go to school as well as supporting technical and vocational trainings that are directly linked to employment. The unconditional cash transfer became very important during the pandemic as families began to lose income it helped ensure children continued to access learning. These two initiatives help people become more independent and be able to give back to their communities.

The Makani centres were closed during covid-19 but the delivery simply shifted to being remote and the value of the staff was able to shine. They continued to provide support to the kids because they have a strong bond to their communities and are exceptionally committed. As all learning went online the Makani centre personnel continued to ensure children were able to learn despite technology challenges for vulnerable children.

Ms. Muzoon Almellehan, UNICEF Global Ambassador

Like millions of Syrians I fled my homeland and living in refugee camps was very challenging. Knowing that the camps were the hardest time in my life there was always hope. Through UNICEF and their partners, enabled by the contributions of zakat, people are able to receive an education and face challenges. This is important because someday refugees may be able to return home and rebuild Syria. Zakat is an obligation and support each other when we can, more than funds it teaches us to have compassion and contribute to the well-being of society in general. History shows that zakat is one of the greatest means of responding to poverty and at a young age understanding the importance of unity and solidarity with those in need is fundamental to Islam. Education is immensely important for societies by empowering them to be active members who contribute. The pandemic has had a large negative impact denying access to education for many refugees and without the GMPFC the effects would have been worse.

We must be confident that together we will be able to support the development of Islamic financing models to be more flexible, more adaptive and emergency responsive, so that we can give children and their families a chance for a better life.

Discussion

Ms. Muzoon Almellehan, UNICEF Global Ambassador

During the hard times my faith and trust in Allah is what gave me hope. Understanding religion and having patience helped me because I knew people would help end my suffering. Worship and prayer was really the best support and helped me to stay positive.

Mr. Abdel Rahman Ghandour, Senior Advisor UNICEF

Islamic giving should be a valuable, sustainable social development tool. Promoting visibility of zakat is important because it encourages others to give and is a catalyst to providing more support to



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children. This includes showing examples of what muslim philanthropy has done and sharing stories and communicating what people are doing in terms of the good effects.

Mr. Syed Husain Quadri , Acting Director of Resilience and Social Development Department, Islamic Development Bank

The collaboration of IsDB and UNICEF on the GMPFC proves that partnerships are the future. Without relationships like this we wouldn't be able to access the right communities and we need good channels to make that happen. We also need to use those relationships to connect from the very top of organisations that have goodwill and link it on the ground to those who need it most.

Dr. Sonia ben Jaafar, CEO Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

Listening to each other in developing partnerships highlights a fine balance between learning from partners and leveraging individual expertise. This was illustrated during the pandemic and the adaptability related to line item budgets and partners were able to be forthright and suggest how the programme needed to change. For example, logistics and transportation was no longer required while printing and electronics were.

Ms. Tanya Chapuisat, UNICEF Jordan Representative

In Jordan a youth platform that was intended to place people in job opportunities became used for people to simply post what they can contribute to their community. It shows how dynamic the response to wanting to engage with their community as well as developing skills to enter the job market. Education is the main driver that gives the world hope but we also need to promote the framework that allows women to work.