

THE
FIRST
20
YEARS

IIFSO



INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC FEDERATION
OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

THE
FIRST
20
YEARS

IIFSO

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC FEDERATION
OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The First Twenty Years

Introduction

One fifth of the human race professes to be Muslim. They control some of the world's most vital natural resources.

Such numbers and such wealth will remain meaningless as long as Muslims do not fully implement the concept of Ummah (the universal brotherhood of Islam).

It is here, we realize the necessity of unity and fusion of the Islamic world into a single entity; thus the role of international organizations becomes clear.

Only Islamic organizations, working in accordance with the guidelines of the Qur'an and Sunnah, can bring about the change we look forward to.

In this context, the creation of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) constitutes:

- * An Islamic imperative: to consolidate and channel the capabilities of students who are a vital part of the Ummah.
- * A political imperative: to facilitate the greater participation of Muslim students in events concerning the Ummah and the world at large.
- * An intellectual imperative: to nurture positive thinking required for the rejuvenation of the Ummah.
- * A human and cultural imperative: to disseminate the message of Islam throughout the world.

The establishment of IIFSO was the first step toward the organized promotion of concepts such as:

- * Unity of the Islamic thought
- * Universality of the Islamic Movement
- * Consolidation of a mature leadership

These concepts can assist the Ummah shake off its present stagnation and play its rightful role in the world today.

A Historical Background

In the early 1950's and 1960's, student activities were at a peak. Colonialism had almost faded out and a reawakening was emerging in the Muslim countries, many of which had just gained political independence. It was in this spirit, Muslim youth who had played active roles and suffered the ordeals in attaining freedom, desired to work more conscientiously for the Islamic cause.

Also, greater awareness was coming about on the national and international levels for resurrecting the Islamic thought and identity.

This awareness was the catalyst in the founding of localized student associations in the United Kingdom, France and West Germany. The 1960's witnessed the development and formation of federations such as the ones in the U.K. (1962) and the U.S. (1963).

The movements grew. More associations were established in many other countries.

These Muslim organizations were blessed with positive attitudes that led to their development and ultimate uniting in the formation of IIFSO.

Today, nearly twenty years later, nearly every major Muslim youth organization in the world is affiliated with IIFSO—which was admitted as a non governmental organization (NGO) by the United Nations. IIFSO is invited to, and has attended many conferences on youth and other socio-cultural related issues.



A Seed Is Planted

The idea for establishing a world federation of Muslim student organizations, ultimately IIFSO, was adopted at an international convention which was held in July 1966 at Ibadan, Nigeria and attended by student representatives from Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Ghana, and Guinea.

A preparatory committee was subsequently formed to mobilize ideas and resources for an international conference to be held in Sudan in December 1968.

This conference, which was well attended, included delegates from the Muslim students associations in Europe, North America and Africa, adopted an interim constitution.

This was followed by the February 1968 meeting at Makkah al Mukarrahah (during the Hajj season 1387-1388 H) where delegates resolved to:

1. Consider the IIFSO constitution and make any amendments.
2. Make arrangements for convening IIFSO General Constituent Assembly
3. Establish widespread contacts to:
 - a) introduce IIFSO and convey the message about its mission and purpose,
 - b) secure recognition and affiliation from the maximum number of student organizations,
 - c) ensure material support for the Constituent Assembly.

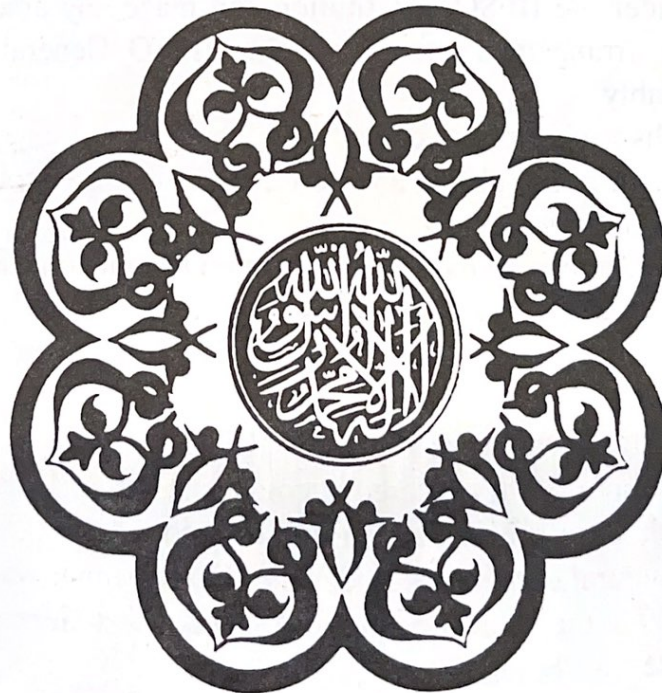
Eminent Muslims who were told about IIFSO endorsed the idea and expressed their support. They offered accolades and some very useful suggestions, which were utilized at various instances.

The first inaugural conference under the IIFSO banner was held during June 13-17, 1969 at the Bilal Mosque in Aachen, West Germany. A movement had come into being.

The International Islamic Awakening

While IIFSO was taking shape, the older generation of Muslims was active. The world Islamic movement was gaining prominence and sought the collaboration of students and youth organizations in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

Prominent Muslim scholars including Abdul A'la Maududi, 'Ala al Fassi, and Muhammad Natsir rendered their blessings for the growing cooperation among world Muslims toward Islamic work.



IIFSO Policies

IIFSO has drawn up guidelines to provide it with a direction in the quest towards achieving its objectives.

- It is an Islamic organization that considers the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAAS) as its only source of guidance.
- It considers the contemporary Islamic movement to be the natural and fertile ground for nurturing Muslim youth.
- It extends its cooperation to all local and international Islamic organizations, that are serving the cause, on a reciprocal basis.
- It applies modern methods and technologies for its growth and development.
- It serves to maintain good relations with other international organizations to project Muslim rights and serve the cause of justice everywhere. It is in this context, IIFSO has been admitted to the United Nations as a non governmental organization (NGO) and maintains an office at the UN headquarters in New York.
- With its primary obligation to Muslim youth, IIFSO strives to:
 - i) redirect their thought toward the true understanding of Islamic concepts. A part of this effort includes the publication of works by major Muslim scholars in their original language and in some eighty world languages.
 - ii) inculcate positive and constructive thinking directed toward unified and active Da'wah work and to support justice everywhere.
 - iii) help the youth mould their lives in accordance with Islamic injunctions. For this it sponsors training camps around the world.
 - iv) help youth focus their attention on issues that relate to interests of the Ummah. Muslims are world citizens and have an obligation to defend this right. The Qur'an declares: That the Prophet might be witness over you and that you may be witness over the nations. (xxii:78)

Hands Across the World

An international organization, IIFSO serves to coordinate and support the work of its member institutions, to:

- help them become self-supporting and to attain recognition as representatives of Muslim youth in their areas, through providing moral and material support.
- coordinate affiliate activities at the inter regional and international levels; promote the exchange of know how to ensure uniformity in methods and direction of work.
- foster mutual consultation (shura) to create harmony and consistency between IIFSO and its affiliates,
- study and help in founding Islamic organizations in areas lacking in such activities.
- to help them make effective organizations that they may play decisive roles in serving their communities.

Sisters in Struggle

Muslim youth are active on all fronts: brothers as well as sisters are working collectively and in their own areas are advancing toward IIFSO's objectives of nurturing the true ummatic spirit.

While working in their local areas, IIFSO sisters are visible at the national and international level through participation in various camps and conferences.

A major recognition of IIFSO's status as a representative of young Muslim women was its participation in the International Women's Conference held at Nairobi, Kenya in 1985.

The sisters are being afforded a growing number of opportunities to participate more actively through various camps and meetings. Major events include the International Women's Camp at Omdurman, Sudan in 1985 and a leadership camp in New York City in May of 1987.

IIFSO sisters have organized camps and meetings in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Trinidad. Their social services include collecting clothing for the needy in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Malawi, and Sudan.

The sisters are active in arranging lectures and similar services at annual conventions of the Islamic Society of North America. In the U.S. they have arranged lectures and camps at Alabama, Philadelphia, and New Jersey.

IIFSO sisters made an important move in Latin America with the convening of an international conference for Muslim women in the continent at Quito Ecuador (July 31 - August 3, 1987).

Objectives

An organization committed to Islam, IIFSO's major objective is to establish the Word of Allah as well as strive toward fulfilling the Islamic mission.

IIFSO is consequently aiming to:

- a) promote the Islamic awareness among students and present Islamic alternatives in solving problems that face the contemporary world.
- b) foster the attainment of an Islamic personality through providing students moral, ideological, social, and behavioral training,
- c) strengthen fraternal bonds among Muslim students across the world and encourage them to assume the mantle of leadership in the future.
- d) support the cause of Islamic brotherhood, cooperation, social justice, and unity.

Methods

- IIFSO is committed to using all lawful methods that are consistent with the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- IIFSO conducts its activities through its affiliates and by directly initiating projects and services.

IIFSO is constantly in touch with all its affiliates and Islamic workers. This exchange of information and ideas is a source of growth and for strengthening our links.

Till recently, IIFSO was publishing its popular newspaper, Al Akhbar in both Arabic and English. This newspaper has been replaced by a newsletter, "IIFSO Connection."

Spreading the Word Worldwide

Education and training are a vital part of IIFSO's methodology in attaining its objectives of uniting the Ummah and encouraging progress. It has initiated the publication of works by publishing their translations in about eighty languages. New horizons continue to be explored.

Some of the languages already utilized include:

Arabic, the language of the Qur'an.

European languages—English, French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, Dutch, Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, Albanian, Polish, Finnish, Russian, and Bulgarian.

Asian languages—Turkish, Pashtu, Persian, Kurdish, Urdu, Hindi, Kanadi Tamil, Nepalese, Sinhalese, Maldivian, Assamese, Sindhi, Indonesian, Malay, Korean, Burmese, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Fijian, Tibetan, Telegu

African languages—Somali, Swahili, Zulu, Hausa, Yoruba, Lugandan, Ga, Ewe, Vanti, Chishewa, Eunima, Igbo, Foulani, Afrikanse, Shona, Towe.

The galaxy of authors on IIFSO's roster include Abul 'Ala Maududi, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad ibn Abdulwahab, Hasan al Banna, Abul Hasan Nadwi and Ismail al Faruqi.

Major works published by IIFSO include Sayyid Qutb's "The Characteristics of Islamic Vision" and "This Religion of Islam," Maududi's "The Role of Muslim Students in the Reconstruction of the Islamic World" and "Toward Understanding Islam," Malek bin Nabi's "The Qur'anic Phenomenon," Muhammad al Ghazali's "The Character of a Muslim," Khurshid Ahmed's "Socialism or Islam," Ismail al Faruqi's "Belief in the Oneness of God."

An Education in Leadership

In most instances student movements are created in isolation and forced to rely on whatever resources they may have access to.

This means a wealth of energy, but improperly directed towards the goal of attaining the unified objectives of the Muslim Ummah.

These energies are now being given a new approach and direction by IIFSO through its worldwide student leadership programs.

The leadership programs have proven to be largely successful where ever they are implemented. In this, the new approach is the uniting of student and youth leaders in order to share ideas. Besides getting to know each other in the programs, participants discuss relevant issues, learn new leadership skills, share experiences, and devise strategies. This new attitude towards training helps in promoting the work being done in the participants' respective areas.

Major camps organized by IIFSO include:

South Asian Region: participants from Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Kashmir, and Bangladesh.

Caribbean Region: participants from Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Suriname, Jamaica, and Bermuda.

Pacific Region: participants from Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.

Southeast Asia Region: participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Fatani, Phillipines, Brunei, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

Europe and North America: participants from U.K. France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia, and the U.S.

African Region: held in Sudan, Nigeria, Mozambique, South Africa (IIFSO affiliates are conducting activities and working against apartheid.)

Additionally, numerous local and sub regional camps are also organized periodically as continuing education programs.

Conferences

IIFSO's international conferences have attained a new significance in recent years. Apart from providing opportunities for interaction, consultation, and education, they also serve to convey the organization's message.

Notable among them were the conferences held in Turkey, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Sudan. The epoch making meetings in Turkey witnessed the open display of Islamic symbols and identity after years of suppression.

Some major conferences organized by IIFSO include:

First IIFSO Conference, Aachen, West Germany (1969)

Second IIFSO Conference, Aachen, West Germany (1971)

Third IIFSO Conference, Istanbul, Turkey (1975)

Fourth IIFSO Conference, Istanbul, Turkey (1977)

Fifth IIFSO Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1980)

Sixth IIFSO Conference, Khartoum, Sudan (1984)

International Representation

IIFSO is continuously striving to widen its horizons to increase effectiveness as a representative organization.

It fosters cooperation with Islamic as well as secular organizations to learn and to secure Islamic rights around the world.

As a NGO at the UN, IIFSO was invited to the International Youth Conference held in Spain under aegis of UNESCO. This conference provided IIFSO a forum to put across the Islamic activities now taking roots there.

Self Financing

An institution that is undertaking a mission, IIFSO needs more than dedication. It needs finances to sustain and to expand its worldwide activities.

Among the many options available, IIFSO elected to become self sufficient through publishing Islamic books in the original and translated versions.

Undoubtedly, during its formative years IIFSO received some donations. However, self-financing remains a priority. In remaining so, IIFSO has liberated itself from the restraints that some donors may imply in return for their favors.

The development and progress of self-financing capabilities has provided new and unhindered approaches toward the progress of Islamic work. The Federation has published over five hundred titles involving more than ten million copies.

إِنَّمَا فَتِيَّةٌ ءَامَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى

...They were youths who believed in their Lord, and we advanced them in guidance.

IIFSO Executives:

Secretary General

Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed
P.O. Box 448
Herndon, Va. 22070
U.S.A.

Assistant Sec. General

Br. Kamruddin M. Nor
3402 Jalan Ampang Hilri 2
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Representative in America

Dr. Omar Hassan Kasule
P.O. Box 17032
Washington, DC 20041-00322
U.S.A.

Representative in Europe

Br. Adli Hassan A. Abu Hajar
8 Nobel Vagen
21429 Malmo
Sweden
Tel: 0488051 (h)

Representative in Africa

Br. Ibrahim Abdul Hafeez
P.O. Box 3602
Khartoum
Sudan
Tel: 57032 Tlx: 22519

Representative in Asia

Br. Amanullah Khan
3402 Jalan Ampang
Hilri 2
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Executive Director

Br. Mustafa Tahan
P.O. Box 8631
Salimiah
Kuwait
Tlx: 30602 SERAT KT
Cbl: IIFSO KUWAIT