



Report of the MIA President and Executive Council - 2016

Manitoba Islamic Association
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Dear Members of the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA),

Assalamu Alaikum.

On behalf of the Manitoba Islamic Association Executive Council (EC), I am pleased to present to you the Annual MIA President's report for the Annual General Meeting 2016. Given that this is the final report for the term of the current executive council, I will use it as an opportunity to reflect on the past 3 years.

We ask that you forgive our shortcomings and pray that our efforts, insignificant as they were, be accepted by Allah (swt).

Executive Council

This EC has been a great team. It was a diverse group with 6 different cultural backgrounds, both genders, and a spectrum of ages and professional backgrounds. This diversity was a strength because the EC members recognized that they formed collective leadership. Topics were discussed, debated, and once a vote was taken, everyone supported the decision and was ready to move on. To make MIA work smoothly, EC members had different areas of responsibility. They each had autonomy while respecting the collective will and decision making of the EC.

The EC members also understood that despite their different titles, they were all duly elected by the members and individually responsible to the membership.

MIA's EC is what is called in the non-profit world a "working board". It is directly involved in the operational details of the organization. As MIA continues to grow insha Allah, we hope to see MIA evolve to a "governance board" model, where the board's responsibilities include setting priorities, planning, asset stewardship and the overall direction of MIA. Operational issues would be managed by professional staff lead by an executive director. If we continue this trajectory we could be in a position to have an executive director in less than 5 years.

The members of the 2015-2016 EC and their major areas of responsibilities are as follows:

1. Idris Elbakri, President. Outreach and public relations, fundraising, khutba committee.
2. Aziz Mian, First Vice President. Outreach and public relations, funeral services, Manitoba Muslim magazine.
3. Salman Qureshi, Second Vice President. Facilities, maintenance, IT.
4. Ferdose Shiekheldine, Secretary. Membership committee, events committee.
5. Eid Mahmudov, Treasurer. Auditing and finance, takaful committee.
6. Deema Al-Syed, Member. Educational programs, Al Noor weekend school.

7. Reda Elgazzar, Member. Waqf committee, religious affairs (imams), Food-o-rama, scholarship committee, Al Fajr Quran institute.

It has been a pleasure and an honour serving with these fine brothers and sisters. They have, on average, put in about 20 hours/week of their personal time to serve you and the MIA. We ask Allah (swt) to reward their efforts to bless us with an even stronger and more successful incoming EC.

Connecting with our History

It is important that as we think about community growth and its future, we don't lose sight of our history, and of the efforts of those before us who pioneered the establishment of MIA. Alhamdulillah over the course of the past 3 years we made many connections to our history, which culminated in a celebration last September of the 40th anniversary of the first mosque in Manitoba, MIA's 247 Hazelwood. We took advantage of the occasion to recognize the founding generation of MIA, many of whom attended the event. We also welcomed the neighbours to thank them for their support for the mosque. The mosque has been renamed Pioneer Mosque to recognize the efforts of the founding generation of MIA. The name was proposed by community elders themselves after the previous EC issued a call for suggestions for names for that mosque.

We also worked with United Way Winnipeg to recognize Islamic History Month during October. United Way hosted an exhibit of Islamic history in Manitoba in their atrium for the duration of the month and hosted a reception with Dr. Allison Marshall, a professor at Brandon University who wrote a paper about the history of Muslims in Manitoba.

Streamline and Systemize

We focused much of our efforts over the past 3 years on streamline operations and creating systematic ways of managing the day-to-day operations. Achievements in this regard include:

- Organizing staff schedules and duties, especially around facility management and janitorial services.
- Creating an equitable policy for facility booking, along with an accessible online booking system.
- Stabilizing donor revenue by launching the 100 Seeds campaign to encourage regular monthly donations. We receive donations of over \$60,000/year through this campaign.
- Creating formal operational policies including a policy on children's safety, privacy, rural satellites, khutba, etc...MIA now has a policy binder which guides the staff and the EC in performing their duties.

Community Communications

The MIA website was revamped in 2014 into a modern mobile-friendly website. It is a great resource of information about the MIA and its services. It receives over 10,000 hits per month.

MIA sends an email to 2000+ subscribers about once a week.

We have also championed social media, to connect with more people and broaden our communication reach. Our Facebook page grew from 418 followers to 2465 at the time of writing. It is updated almost daily. Recently we also launched a twitter account.

New Burial Arrangements

After 2 years of negotiations and work with the City of Winnipeg, we have secured a section for Muslims in the Transcona Cemetery run by the City of Winnipeg. This arrangement gives the community a new option for burials which can save families close to \$2000.

Refugee Support

Since last year's AGM, over 1500 Syrian refugees moved to Manitoba, most of them in Winnipeg. We formed a refugee support committee and using grant funding we hired a settlement support worker. Here is a partial list of some of the services offered in this area: Drivers education class; English class for women; co-organized the City of Winnipeg Refugee Information Fair (May 2016); co-organized three successful Meet and Greet events for hundreds of Syrian refugees; provided transportation to 250 refugees to attend Eid Carnival; organized summer programming for refugee youth; distributed food baskets to 40 families in Ramadan and provided other in-kind support; provided support in the housing area: finding and moving to housing, changing when the housing was not suitable, legal support for lease breaks; arranged a meeting with the minister of families and the minister of education and training (Nov 2016) to discuss housing concerns for refugees; MIA was invited to make a presentation to the Manitoba Association of New comer Settlement Organizations (MANSO) conference; MIA is invited to a bimonthly meeting organized by the province for all refugee-serving organizations. (A full report of MIA's refugee program is available for those interested).

Finances and Transparency

Revenue has increased for the 3rd year in a row: \$330k in 2014, \$578k in 2015 and \$712k in 2016. In 2014 we had a net loss of \$181,735, in 2015 a surplus of \$167,802 and in 2016 a surplus of \$131,121.

The cash position as of September 2016 (end of fiscal year) is \$342k, compared to \$271k in 2015 and \$119k in 2014.

Financial transparency is important for MIA. Our finances are reviewed by both internal auditors as well as a professional auditing company. Audited financial statements are made public annually and in 2015, we published mid-year finances in both English and Arabic. We also have an external book keeper who reviews our expenses regularly and is in charge of issuing cheques.

Programs and Activities, and Volunteer Initiatives

The MIA is Alhamdulillah a hub for activities and programs. A variety of social, educational and spiritual activities are taking place regularly. The great majority of these programs are volunteer lead.

1. Volunteer-run Weekly drop in sports for boys and girls.
2. Volunteer-run bake sales and MIA café.
3. Volunteer-run Eid carnival.

4. Quran programs expanded with a new program on weeknights.
5. Volunteer-run Takaful (financial assistance)
6. Maintenance committee (all volunteers).
7. Events Committee
8. Financial Audit
9. Manitoba Muslim Magazine
10. Outreach
11. Funerals
12. MIA Pembina Valley

Outreach and Public Relations

Outreach and public relations continue to be an area of growth for our organization. This is a strategic issue for Muslims, because of our duty to reach out and educate the community about our faith.

There were too many outreach opportunities to list. Over the past year, we've had over 20 positive stories in the local media about Muslims.

The MIA banquet on October 1 was the climax of our outreach efforts. All 200 seats were sold and the banquet was attended by leaders from all levels of government, non profit sector, financial and legal sector, indigenous leaders, and others.

Our outreach efforts are making MIA a mainstream organization. We have relations with churches, all levels of government, non-profit organizations, school divisions, refugee-serving agencies, media, etc... We have shown that we can engage the community at large in an intelligent and relevant manner. These relationships have benefitted the Muslim community and MIA in many ways. The message about our beautiful peaceful religion and dynamic and diverse community has reached hundreds, and our efforts are being supported through grants and other forms of assistance.

Grants

We have been very active in obtaining grants for MIA. These grants enabled us to offer programs and launch projects that we could not otherwise do. The grants approved or received so far are:

1. Canada Summer Jobs - \$12,753.48 – Approved. To be received shortly.
2. Community Places - \$30,000.00 - Sports Field – Approved.
3. Community Incentives - \$25,000.00 - Soccer Field – Approved.
4. Social Planning Council - \$15,000 - Syrian Youth Programming – Received.
5. Islamic Relief - \$25,000 - Refugee Settlement Worker – Received.
6. Sport Manitoba - \$4,800 - Drop -In Sports Equipment – Received.
7. United Way - \$609.00 - Islamic History Month Display Panels – Approved.
8. City of Winnipeg - \$300 - Eid Festival – Received.
9. City of Winnipeg - \$250 - Pioneer Mosque – Approved.
10. City of Winnipeg - \$100 - Annual Banquet – Received.

This represents over \$113k in funding Alhamdulillah. We are also waiting to hear on the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure grant to support the sports field.

Diversified Revenue Generation

Three years ago MIA relied almost exclusively on donations from the community. Also, revenue was not stable as it depended heavily on a large influx during Ramadan and very little donations through the remainder of the year.

We have stabilized revenue and diversify its sources through the following initiatives:

- 100 Seeds campaign which brings \$5300/month (over \$60,000 per year)
- MIA café, which generates about \$1500/month (close to \$19,000 per year)
- Facility rentals which have generated \$28,000 over the past fiscal year.
- Grants to support MIA programs and facility upgrades.

Long-Term Strategic Initiatives

We have made some progress in a couple of important areas.

On the land development front, we worked with our consultants at WSP to come up with concepts for eventual land development. These concepts include mixed uses of the land, including rental units for revenue generation, expansion of the community centre and mixed office and commercial space. These are very preliminary concepts that require much more discussion and consultation.

The Waqf committee has also made good progress on designing a legal framework for an endowment fund. Working in consultation with the law firm of Tapper and Cuddy, the committee recommends that a MIA foundation be established as guardians of waqf funds. Currently our legal counsel is drafting this framework more formally for consideration by the incoming executive council.

Conclusions

Alhamdulillah we are experience progress and success. MIA is a busy and vibrant organization. There is good momentum in the community. MIA is the pride and joy of Muslims in Manitoba. The positive effects of its work touch Muslims and non-Muslims in Winnipeg and in many other towns and communities.

Finances have been stabilized. Revenue over the past 3 years exceeds expenses. We are now poised for a period of growth where we enhance our services and can start to expand and improve our facilities.

The EC is grateful for the support it received, the feedback and constructive criticism and for all generous contributions that were made. Our community is a great community and we look forward for greater years ahead.

Submitted respectfully,

Idris Elbakri
President
Manitoba Islamic Association