

Cause SHE Cares



In January, IslamBradford published over 3000 copies of dawah booklets titled "What is Islam?" for free distribution in the UK. **Huma Imam** speaks to **Qamar J. Khan-Malik**, who was instrumental in raising the funds, to learn how she did it and to provide a guide for sisters to take-up their own causes.

In just fifteen days, over fifty people from eleven countries opened their wallets to donate a total of £1062 as sadaqa. Can a sister who primarily works from behind the computer screen wield such influence? "I believe no matter what the circumstances, a sister, with the help of Allah and the resources and abilities she has, can definitely make a positive change," says Qamar.

"My personal situation limits my physical involvement with dawah organisations. So, most of my work is done online from home. I use my I.T. proficiency to assist them with web-designing and video-editing.

"IslamBradford had produced a da'wah booklet and were looking for funds to print two thousand copies. I was familiar with the organisation HalfDate so I submitted our cause. The request was accepted for their Ramadhan drive. We promptly began our preparations. I gathered all the required information about our campaign, published it on the website, created banners and designed a web page with a payment button. HalfDate produced a promotional video. I uploaded it on various video-sharing sites, forums, blogs and mailing-lists.

"The drive was launched during the last third of Ramadhan. We needed £907. I was confident that the Muslims would help this

project, but I was not sure if the full amount would be raised. Donations started trickling in, slowly at first. I did not lose hope, for we were in the month of great blessings.

"I used to check for received payments every morning before going to work, and then again on return, and keep account of total and pending amounts. I had assumed that donors would mostly be from US and Europe, but when I saw funds coming from Malaysia, Australia and India, I was overwhelmed! This gave me more motivation to continue.

"I really believe that people, despite their circumstances, are happy to give when they can see the fruits of their contribution and are hopeful for divine rewards. One person sponsored £0.02 for one copy; a single mother sent \$100 and another raised \$280 at an Eid party! Alhamdulillah, we not only reached the target on time, we surpassed it! The experience was humbling and overwhelming.

"This project showed the unity of the Muslim Ummah, that if we all got together we can move mountains. So, yes, if a sister believes in a cause, she really can do something and make a difference. By the will of Allah, if she is sincere, committed and plans well, even if limited to her home, she can turn what others may think impossible into reality."

A Brief Guide to Successful Project Management

1. Identify your cause

What fires me up? What is a source of concern in my community? What situation requires immediate attention and action? Is it poverty alleviation; disaster relief; environment protection; educational or medical enrichment; da'wah work or the need to assist an individual in dire circumstances?

2. Adopt an attitude for success

One hundred percent belief in the need for and the viability of your plans is paramount. Also, you need to be able to relay this conviction to the people you are trying to help and those whose support you seek.

3. Sketch the project's broad structure

Think, consult and decide the floor-plan of your project: What is the name of my mission? What is the timeline? Who am I targeting as my audience or supporters? What resources are required? What skills are handy or vital? Who will I be working with? How much of my time will it consume? Who or what can I use to build credibility?

4. Set up measurable short-term goals

Great change cannot happen overnight. If you aimed to alleviate hunger in your country, you have to start with your neighbourhood. Setting attainable short-range goals will not only move your cause forward but also allow you to take account of the results. Some examples:

- To get 15 schools to mark water-conservation week.
- To get 5 restaurants to donate excess food to the refugee shelter.
- To raise \$1000 directly from people.
- To get all mosques in the city to distribute my project flyers.

5. Formulate action-plans

With short-term goals ready, plan your exact steps to attain them. If your goal was to get restaurants to donate food to a shelter, then you would:

- Find out the liability laws governing food donation in the region.
- Make a list of eateries.
- Contact restaurant managers to discuss cooperation.
- Arrange delivery with shelter volunteers.

6. Draw-up a marketing plan

Decide on a title that is descriptive and attractive. Utilise your own or your volunteer's graphic designing skills to develop promotional materials like logos and banners.

7. Reach the Press

Get in touch with the local journalist and spell out clear facts about your project: "I am...; I am doing...; It is benefitting the community by...;" etc.

Submit a picture related to your cause (for example, your collection of community-donated goods for recycling or a fundraising event you held) to the papers.

8. Utilise social media

Create a website for your cause. Employ the use of all networking options like Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Technorati, etc. for maximum, wider and targeted coverage.

9. Acquire donors

Be organised, committed and passionate towards your cause, and show it. This builds credibility, donor-confidence and interest. Look for connections and explore every link and possibility to reach out to maximum people.

10. Put plans into action

Say 'Bismillah' and go. Stick to your plan but also be ready to accommodate unforeseen hitches. Don't be discouraged by the 'no's and learn from the 'yes's. Assess how far you accomplished your objective. Finally, celebrate the achievement.

Huma Imam is a UAE-based writer with tons of inspirational ideas that she has collected from enterprising Muslimahs around the world.

About HalfDate

HalfDate.com is an online-based sadaqa promotion service. It empowers everyone to be part of the solution by giving half a date or a pleasant word.

Our goal is to utilise the means that Allah ﷻ has given us (you + the Internet) to do something good for this life and the Hereafter, insha Allah.

Each Hijri month, HalfDaters suggest a specific cause (specific goal and due date) and HalfDate.com features it as a DateDrive. For example, through HalfDate, Muslims around the globe (from Trinidad to California) have:

- Donated over \$5,127.54 for textbook
- Showed their care for convert Muslims
- Expressed their appreciations to halal businesses, and
- Donated to publish five teacher study guides for children's books

HalfDate is not only about monetary donation drives because, in Islam, the concept of Sadaqa (charity) is much broader than that. To find out more, visit www.halfdate.com

Save yourself from the (Hell) Fire even with half a date (to be given in charity). And if you do not find a half date, then with a good pleasant word" (Bukhari).