

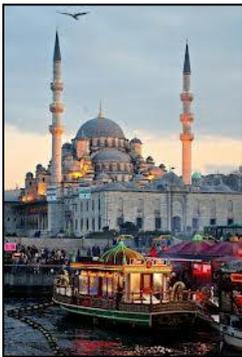


ICRD Monthly Update
March 29, 2013

A New Curriculum for Pakistan's Madrasas

With the central participation of Pakistani religious scholars, **ICRD recently facilitated the development of a model curriculum for Pakistan's madrasas based on best educational practices from throughout the Muslim World.**

Instrumental in this two-year process were ICRD-sponsored trips to Turkey and Egypt in which Pakistani government officials and top madrasa religious leaders examined various elements of the religious education systems in those two countries. Similar research on Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia also informed the formulation of this model.



Thus, by drawing on the accomplishments of Islamic education in a variety of settings, this curriculum model effectively incorporates "contemporary" subjects such as math, civics, and the physical and social sciences, while remaining true to the central religious core. It also includes a strong emphasis on critical thinking skills, human rights, and tolerance for other sects, faiths, and cultures.

Efforts are currently underway to elicit feedback from other madrasa administrators and faculty through their exposure to the new model in selected Pakistani university training programs. The overseas trips also inspired the first madrasa teacher training initiative officially sponsored by Pakistan's National Madrasa

Oversight Board. ICRD conducted the inaugural session of this training for 29 "best-of-the-best" madrasa teachers, representing each of the sects that sponsor these schools.

The basic idea behind the model is not to force madrasa leaders to use a prescribed curriculum, but to offer them an alternative for accomplishing what many of them already want. This should be viewed as only the beginning of what will be an ongoing process of madrasa-led curricular enhancement.

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With Best Wishes,

Doug Johnston
President
ICRD

www.ICRD.org



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