

Organisational Work: Project Planning

By the ISB Campus Mentors

A Note to Say ...

Why do we do Islamic work; in organisations, mosques, Islamic societies etc....?

Allah instructs us, in the Quran, to ‘Invite to the way of your lord, with wisdom and good instruction...’

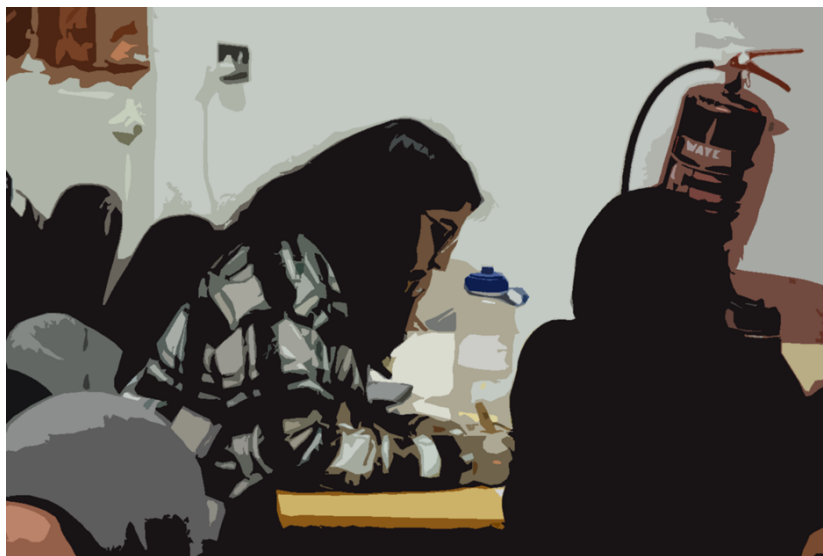
The Messengers called their people to the Oneness of God and good works through compassionate concern and engagement. As Muslims, we are changemakers who confidently and proactively seek goodness in society; effecting positive change.

‘Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best’

~16:125~

This is a document that will outline the key aspects needed to plan and execute a successful project, prepared for you by the ISB Campus mentors.

May you find benefit and gain useful insights, Ameen.



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Leaders

We are all leaders in various capacities! Never underestimate your ability to have a positive impact on those around you. Titles and positions are only one layer of leadership. We all carry leadership potential in the various multifaceted roles we play; at home, in our educational institutions, amongst friends and in community groups.

Leaders - build dynamic relationships with their teams to motivate towards a common vision

Managers - translate vision into action

Some Examples of Leadership Styles

It is best to be a **transformational** and **servant** leader rather than a **transactional** leader.

Transactional leader: as a member of a team, you will receive material rewards in exchange for your time and labour.

Transformational leader: appeals to the souls and hearts of team members with Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence. As Muslims, this means inspiring towards the example of Our Messenger AS, towards upright character and social concern, whilst striving to please Allah. This maximises team engagement, effort and results.

‘You have indeed in the Apostle of Allah a beautiful pattern of conduct for one whose hope is Allah and the Final Day’

~33:21~

Servant leader: serving and facilitating the needs of others. This type of leader promotes emotional well-being in the team.

Some of the Qualities of Good Leaders

Intention: our intention must be pure in order for our work to be blessed; it should be only to please Allah. This will help overcome the ego/ ‘nafs’ that may seek fame, position, and power. It is the nature of much Islamic organisational work that leaders get thrust into the limelight. It is therefore very important to secure our intention and to retain honesty and humility.

Character: a leader always stands up for ‘Adl: Justice

“Oh you who have faith, fear Allah and be with those who are true.”

~9:119~

Action: a leader leads by example, joining in the struggle of the work, like the Prophet (AS).

Knowledge and practical wisdom: a leader not only has sufficient knowledge for the task but also the wisdom of lived experience.

Dealing with people: Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence can harness hearts and souls for a common vision.

Emotional Intelligence: self-awareness, regulation, and motivation, as well as empathy and having effective relationships (i.e. networks) all lead to having a positive climate and motivated team members.



Vision, Mission, and Values ...

What are they?

This is the **'BIG THINKING'** that every organisation requires. A **consistent** Vision, Mission and Values Statement for the **whole** organisation and all its sub-projects is **critical**.

This gives *clear direction* to the group and keeps efforts on track. For example, your organisation may want to provide resources for convert Muslims... or provide prayer facilities at school... or be a professional networking opportunity for graduates. Without a Vision and Mission, efforts can get derailed and teams can get distracted with other priorities, wasting time and resources, leading to disengagement. It is worth spending time and effort clarifying your Vision and Mission Statements.

Vision Statement - the 'What?' - Our ISB Campus Vision:

British Muslim youth exploring faith in a contemporary, friendly and spiritual way

Mission Statement - the 'How?' - Our ISB Campus Mission:

A space for young British Muslims to:

- 1. To develop a deep connection to our faith***
- 2. To cultivate a strong, confident British Muslim youth identity***
- 3. To encourage learning, reflection and self-development***
- 4. To address issues of concern in our communities***
- 5. To provide a friendly, warm and nurturing environment***

Values Statement - the 'Who?' - This statement is about who we are and the values we stand by/believe in. Our ISB Campus Values:

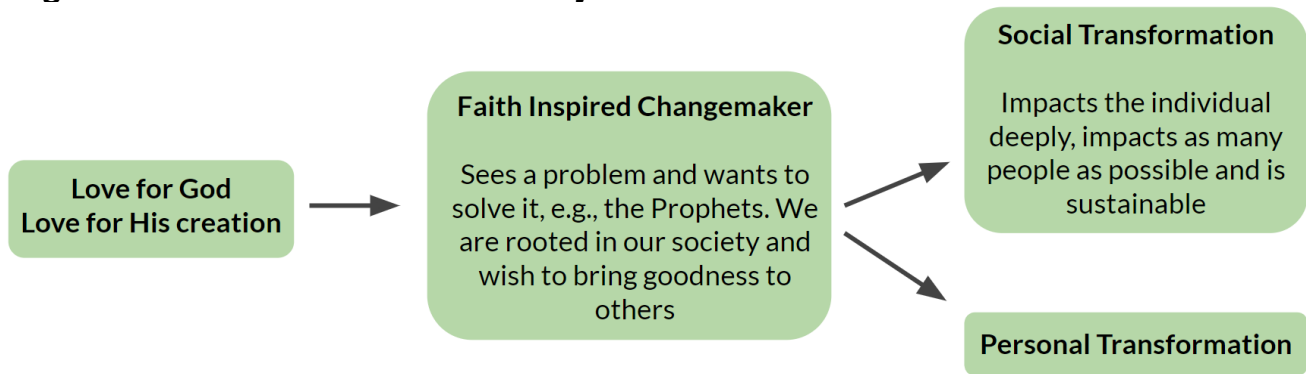
- Teamwork***
- Leadership development/
continuous improvement***
- A culture of learning***
- Equality of all attendees***
- The values of compassion/
respect and friendliness***

Many of you will find that the organisational Vision and Mission Statements may well have already been written for you by past team members. All projects run by an organisation can refer back to these **overarching** Vision, Mission and Values Statements. This ensures consistency of project development and that the culture of the organisation remains clear and on track.



Your Project

Changemakers: How are we here as Project Workers?



Your Project Proposition

When proposing a new project, it is best to begin by considering the following points/questions in order to ascertain the viability and need for the project.

Complete a **situational analysis**: it is critical to know what projects are already being run *before* you decide to initiate a new project. It may be that this work is being done by specialists in their field and your volunteers will be better working with them. It may well be that there is a **critical need** for this project, in which case a situational analysis will help you realise that.

- It is worth taking the time out to really deliberate on these next few questions, as, sometimes, it is very easy to see a need and to try and jump in and solve it without realising that others are already doing the same work - or, that you actually haven't got the resources for the long-term development of this project.
- Would you **ally** with other changemakers/organisations?
- Do you have the **resources** to provide this service?
- It may be worth conducting a **SWOT analysis** at this point:

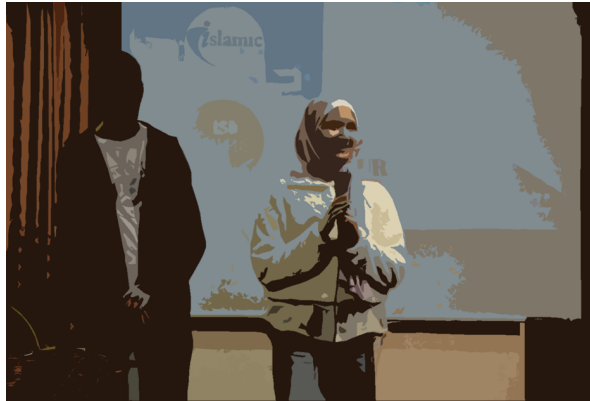
Strengths - what are the strengths of your organisation?

Weaknesses - what are the weaknesses of your organisation and team?

Opportunities - what are the opportunities available for this project to succeed?

Threats - what would be the threats/risks that would need to be managed in order for this project to succeed?

- **Who** do you want to help?
- What is the **problem** they face?
- What is the **solution**?
- **How** will you provide this service?... You can now create a **Project Proposition Statement!!!**



Project Model

Once you have written a Project Proposition Statement, you will need to create a successful project model. Here are the key aspects to plan:

- **Awareness:** how will you let your audience know about the project?
- **Buy-in and Support:** how will you get the audience to buy in and take up the opportunity?
- **Key Activities:** e.g., what is the year plan, events, online events etc.
- **Key Resources:** e.g., website, YouTube channel, social media, mailing list, contact information, Whatsapp groups - a main form of communication to all members/attendees.
- **Key Partners:** what other organisations and groups will you work with? Each need to bring something e.g., multi-faith dimension.
- **Succession Plan:** how would you ensure the project continues in the long-term? This is CRITICAL.

The Team

Team Leader: you may have been voted into this position or you may have stepped forward yourself. Regardless of how you became a team leader, there must be **skills** that you have that others have noticed that make you right for this task. Remember, this position is an Amaanah/Trust, so **do your best**. Do not think that you are not up to the task or let Imposter Syndrome creep in. Know **why** you've chosen to lead this project. How does it match your interests and skills? Why does it matter? How are you going to explain the benefit to potential team members?

Effective teams work well because everyone is **clear** about the project objective and their role, they bond well, are motivated in their roles and are led by an effective project lead who understands the vision.

Team: what **roles** are needed on your team? Who can do them? Who will support / who do you need to consult / who to inform? Ensure that your team members choose their roles based on **skill, talent, motivation** and **commitment**. Do not choose people for roles on the basis of who you know and who your friends are.

Remember: the person must be chosen for the role on the basis of *skills, passion, hard work* and *commitment*. The choice of person is an '**Amaanah**' (a trust with Allah).

Suggested roles include:

- In charge
- Vice in charge

- Treasurer
- Secretary

Further examples, if applicable, are:

- Programme coordinator
- Outreach worker
- Audio-visual in charge

- Guest in charge
- Media liaison
- Food, venue booker ... etc.

Supporting Team Members

Who needs what **support**? How will you support them?

The **style** of leadership needs to mould to the situation:

	Experienced in role	New to role
High levels of support from leader	Supportive	Coaching
Low levels of support from leader	Enabling	Directing



Project Goals, Objectives and Strategy

Every project team needs to spend some time defining their *Project Goals, Objectives and Strategy*. Every project within an organisation will have its *own* list of goals, objectives and strategies. It is not necessary that an organisation's individual projects will all have the *same* list of these goals, objectives and strategies.

Goals: this is what you aim to achieve in a project.

E.g., Project 1: We aim to help young people recite the Quran with Tajweed.

Project 2: We aim to provide prayer facilities for Muslim students (male and female).

Project 3: We aim to engage with schools to run workshops at the local mosque that help teachers bring Islam to life!

Objectives: this is the practical steps you take to reach goals; they must be **SMART** (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imebound).

E.g., Project 1: We will organise Tajweed classes so that all students will have learnt to read with xxxx number of rules.

Project 2: We will provide a prayer room for males and females. It will be accessible, quiet and clean. On Fridays, khutbahs will be delivered.

Project 3: We plan to host 20 schools with a well planned 1.5 hour immersive workshop at the local mosque.

Strategy: this is how to achieve the goals.

E.g., Project 1: Tajweed teacher with experience of this age group will be sourced. Termly Learning Outcomes will be defined. We will advertise on certain forums. Cost, £x. 30 students will be expected to attend. Hardship bursary will be available.

Project 2: A request will be submitted for a prayer room in a quiet location with an adjoining bathroom. We will fundraise for prayer mats/Qurans. Any meetings will need prior permission from the committee. Khutbahs will be on relevant topics in the English language. We may need to have some training on this.

Project 3: An immersive, fun and spiritually enriching workshop for primary and secondary school students will be written.

The latter will include dispelling common misconceptions. RE syllabus will be checked in order to make sure our workshop consolidates what students are learning and helps teachers by bringing the faith to life.

We will check our resources with a scholar and the mosque committee.

We will write to 50 schools expecting a take up of 20. Training for volunteers will be organised.

Planning the Project Process

Once you've defined the Objectives, Goals and Strategies, there are a few questions to keep in mind when executing the project.

Firstly, however, it is important to **agree upfront on the project remit and plan**, so that all team members are on the same page about what is expected of them and what outcomes they must strive toward.

Alongside this, it is also key to consider the following points to make everything clear to yourself and your team:

- What does success *look like* for this project? How will we **measure** it?
- What are the **opportunities**? What are the **risks** and how can we *reduce* them? A risk assessment is critical.
- **Plan** what needs doing when. Do some things need to be done before others?
- Plan the **budget**
- Where are you going to **track progress** on the project? Shared **spreadsheets** are a fantastic way of keeping the whole team up-to-date and on track.
- What is your **budget; income and expenses?**
- How will everyone **communicate**?
- How often/how/when will people give more significant updates?
- How often/how/when will you meet to make decisions, discuss **risks** and issues, and unblock barriers?
- How are you going to **maintain energy and excitement** amongst the team? How will you celebrate success?
- How are you going to **capture feedback** and learnings?
- **Evaluation**: it is really important to evaluate your project at the end in order to learn how to do it better next time.

Here is an example of a really useful planning tool that will help you keep track of the whole project. Your team can create something similar and include whatever sections needed for your project:

[ISB Project Planning Example Spreadsheet](#)



Running Meetings

How you run team meetings will lay the foundation for how **productively** and **smoothly** your project runs. It is important to keep your meetings well structured and organised to *avoid losing momentum and team motivation*. Here are some tips on how to run a meeting successfully:

Have **clear** project aims and keep going back to them. It is easy to go off track
Be clear as to what **commitment** is required from each team member. Sometimes people join thinking their role will include xyz to realise later what was actually expected was very different; this can be demotivating.

Prepare for meetings. Share agenda for meetings well beforehand.

Stick to time.

Keep clear **minutes** and share in a timely way.

Keep **checklists** of jobs done and jobs 'to do.'



Extra Tips ...

This is **YOUR** organisation. We support you to be **brave, creative** and **inventive!**

Pitfalls: ‘*Imposter Syndrome*’ - feeling as though you are an imposter and unworthy. Campus hears from a **wide variety of people**: scholars, specialists/academics, activists and members who share their real life experiences. This **re-frames** who can speak. You can always give experiences. You can always share even one ayah or hadith, and you can always advise one another. We would just say to be careful not to speak on topics that are outside of your experience or specialisation.

Fear / Growth Mindset: take chances (with preparation)! Sometimes people don't take on tasks because of *fear of failure*. We'd like you to try and **give it a go** and learn from your mistakes.

Procrastination: always remember why we do this work!!! Some sound advice for this - all team members should agree on a **timescale** by which to respond to one another. Remember, delaying responding to one another or not sticking to targets will let the whole team down, and can cause **energy** to dissipate.

Decisions being overlooked - stick with decisions that have been made, e.g., if you've said that you're going to have a meeting then have the meeting and don't cancel at the last minute. Do your *best to stick to project deadlines*.

Not building a team - sometimes teams may not be large enough or we try to do too much by ourselves. It is **really important** to have teams so that we can consult one another, and **delegate/distribute tasks**. Remember **shura/consultation** is an Islamic principle wherein the whole group feels invested in the project and feels a sense of achievement in the end.

If you/a team member gets **lost/bogged down... just ask for help!** The organisation is here to help.



~ From The Campus Mentors ~

