

# Facing challenges for success

**Dr Hany**, President of Islamic Relief charity, told Laura Pauley about the challenges and opportunities that face charity work, with the relationship between charities and governments over future decades

**There are many challenges that charities** like Islamic Relief face, as Dr Hany explains, "Stereotyping is one, if you carry the Islamic name then people assume that you carry an Asian agenda. Everyday activities become hard work – like going across the border in fear that you may be wrongly arrested. On a business level, transferring money from your own headquarters to your office is a challenge. A simple task like this can take anything up to 4 months."

Dr Hany is right of course. The challenges that are faced by charities involve a number of different issues, including anything from how the charities can meet the new regulatory laws due to money laundering, to funding issues.

On the other hand there are also great opportunities for these charities. Dr Hany outlines one in particular, "There is a major gap in human resources for people who don't speak English. Because of this, we struggle to educate and train them. Noticing this hole in the market, Islamic Relief have spent the past few years organising over 14 international conferences."



These events proved to be a huge success, focusing on discussions of language and culture. "The level of discussion was incredible," says Dr Hany, "and astonishingly enough we found that a lot of the men and women who attended, who are continuously looked at by society as undeveloped, had some very powerful views. Just because they don't express their opinion in English, they are not undeveloped, instead they just have a different culture, value and language to what we know."

Charities' approaches have changed dramatically over the past 25 years, moving into the digital world, to make communication between charities and beneficiaries so much simpler. As Dr Hany outlines "video conferencing saves you travel time and enables you to have the exact information you need at the time you need it."

The development of organisations has grown dramatically. Muslim charities in particular have come a long way since the 1970's, when there was only one. Now with over 30 organisations the sector is having a positive effect on other countries, with the likes of the Middle East and Africa following suit.

Charities, particularly Islamic Relief don't like relying on the government for funding. "We would lose the independence of our charity," Dr Hany tells me. "The role of the government should be to be the guardian of the country, and the charitable organisation representing the community should bring the truth of such a country to a national and international level."

The government and charitable organisations need to come to a mutual understanding, giving charities the freedom to function without interference. After all, charities like Oxfam and Save the Children have been functioning for the last 50 to 70 years. ●

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