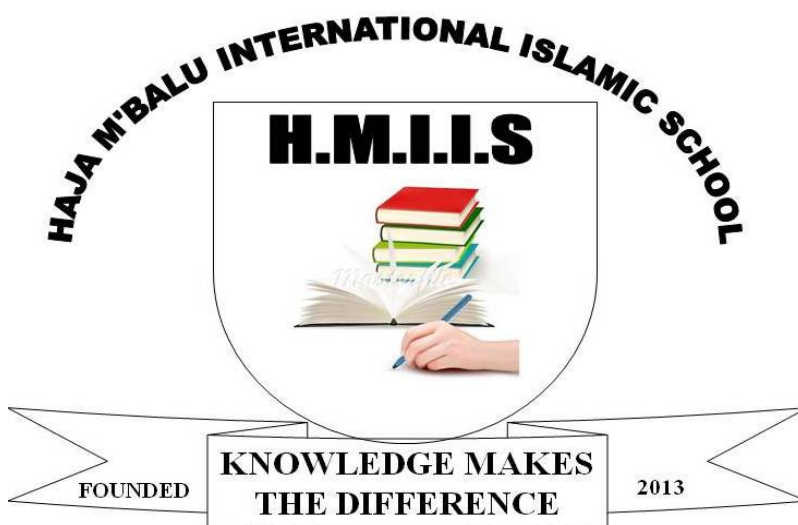


HAJA M'BALU INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC SCHOOL



SCHOOL PROJECT PROPOSAL

AN AGENDA FOR ISLAMIC NURSERY SCHOOL IN SIERRA LEONE

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ABSTRACT

Education is the birth right of every Muslim Man and Woman as Islam puts considerable emphasis on its followers to acquire knowledge. Investment in education is the best investment one can make, because it eventually leads to intellectual property which is an intangible property that no one can steal or destroy.

Education is the property on which no Government can levy tax. It was as a result of this that Haja M'balu International Islamic School at 9 Abidjan Street Lungi thought it prudent to open an Islamic Nursery School that was launched by the Senior Inspectors of Schools Mr. Mohamed S. Fofanah at a ceremony held on the school compound on Tuesday 13th August, 2013.



INTRODUCTION

Pre-primary education according to the National Policy on Education is the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior their entering the primary school. The first five years of a child are very crucial and important in his life as whatever he is exposed to during the period has a serious and lasting effect on him/her in future. No serious government takes the education of her citizens at that stage with levity. In France, the central government shares the largest responsibility of the total cost of educating the children while the local authority provides the remainder. In England and Wales, it is the local authorities that control and administer the pre-school education through nationally prepared guidelines; this is equally the case in Sierra Leone.

As precious as the pre-primary education is, it is sad to note that it received an unappreciable attention by the Sierra Leone government and citizens for a long time. So many educational Conferences held in Sierra Leone failed to address any issue related to pre-primary education. Rather, it focused much on primary, secondary, tertiary education, teacher education, science and technical education as well as women education. The 6-3-3-4 system of education is silent about pre-primary education as well. It was not until recently that the Sierra Leone Government with advice from the Gbamanja Commission released a white paper broken its silence on the importance of pre primary school to be attached to every primary school realizing the need to have a say in the conduct of nursery education and thus clearly stated the purpose and direction of pre-primary education in Sierra Leone.

The indelibility of the knowledge acquired by young and innocent children suggests the paramount importance of early childhood education. Knowledge in childhood is likened to an engraved mark on a rock, which is difficult to rub off. As it is better to train boys than to mend men, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.O.H.) emphatically mentioned it, that children must be religiously educated in their early stages. He asked parents to command their children to be observing salat when they are seven years of age. In another instance, he observed that the moment a child is able to distinguish between the left and the right hands; he should be commanded to pray. They should have been given elementary knowledge of Islam before this time. This is because a child could only be asked to pray after he had been taught what to say while praying, how to pray, whom to pray to and other pre-requisites of prayer. Sowing the seed of Iman and Islam in the heart of children was not taken lightly by the companions of the prophet. Once a man was arrested by the police for drinking in Ramadan and when the

case was brought before ‘Umar, he remarked: “Woe to you! Even our children are keeping fast in this month”.



Pre-primary education is not a new development among Muslims in Sierra Leone. The first stage of Qu’ranic education started as early as the third year of life. Before the advent of Western education in the country, early Islamic and Qu’ranic education was given prominence among the Muslims. Classes were held at the Alpha ‘house under the shade of trees and in the mosque premises. In this level of education, emphasis was laid on learning shorter chapters of the Qur’an through repetition and by rote, alphabets of the Arabic language as well as acquisition of some writing skills.

MOTTO

Knowledge Makes the Difference

FOUNDED

13th August, 2013.

AIMS & OBJECTIVE

The school aims and objectives are:

- To prepare and train the future generation to work as agents of Allah on earth.
- To inculcate in the child the sense of love, care, affection; humility, equity, honesty, integrity, justice and other values based on Islamic ethics.
- To develop in the child a spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature and local environment so that he becomes conscious of his responsibility to develop himself and his environment for the benefit of human race and his consequent accountability in the next world.
- To teach the child the basic academic skills based on Islamic epistemology.
- To produce a conducive Islamic environment for the proper upbringing of the child and the development of his faculties to realize the full potential of people.
- To put in place amenities both human and material for all round development of the child, spiritually, morally, mentally, culturally and materially in preparation for the adult life.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge without faith is a sharp sword in the hand of a drunken brute. It is a lamp in the hand of a thief to help him pick up the best articles at midnight. That is why there is not the least difference in the nature and conduct of the faithless man of today who has knowledge and the faithless man of yesterday who had no knowledge.

A sort of window dressing Islamic Studies is introduced into some so-called Islamic primary and secondary schools curriculum as a subject thereby giving the false impression that pure Islamic tenets are imparted to the young ones. Or what can we say of some Christian proprietors who include Islamic Studies as a subject into their schools' curriculum to lure unconscious Muslim parents to bring their children to their schools? This attitude is confirmed by Salaudeen when he writes: The inclusion of Islamic Studies in most of the primary and secondary schools is simply to make them attractive to Muslim parents who will assume that the aspect of Islamic education is being taken care of. In fact, it is merely window-dressing.

AGENDA FOR ISLAMIC NURSERY SCHOOL.

The only available agenda for all Islamic nursery schools is no other than Islamizing their curriculum. This agenda becomes incontestable in view of the dual roles expected of any Islamic school namely functioning effectively as a

centre of Islamic culture propagation and production of candidates who will be effectively functional in the contemporary Sierra Leone.

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should cater therefore for the growth of Man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTH

The Haja M'Balu International is the first Islamic school not only in Lungi but in Sierra Leone as it started only with Nursery 1 & 2 but others started with Nursery and Primary School.

The Haja M'Balu International School is situated in a very conducive environment and fenced with a big compound. The Proprietress Haja Inspector M'Balu has already built her reputation of spreading Islam in and around Lungi Town to the extent of establishing the Kaffu Bullom Voice of Islam Women's Wing an organization that comprised all the sections in Lungi Town.

Haja Inspector M'Balu Mansaray having experienced and dealt with so many cases as Head of the Family Support Unit, she has organized a series of workshops, camping and sensitization on the promotion of Islamic Covering 'HIJAB'.

WEAKNESS

The School is grabbing with so many Christians oriented Nursery School that have established years before the inception of the Haja M'Balu International Islamic Nursery School.

The School despite its strength there are also weaknesses especially in the area of running cost. Presently, the school has employed five (5) Teachers, one (1)

caretaker one (1) gate keeper bringing the total staffs to seven (7) at an average Monthly salary of four hundred thousand Leones approximately one hundred dollars (\$ 100) therefore the 7 staff received over \$ 700 monthly.

The School is presently thinking of making provision for another class rooms that will accommodate the Nursery pupils after graduation to both Nursery 3 and Primary School.

OPPORTUNITIES

The School has built some reputation through the proprietress Inspector Haja M'Balu Mansaray who has really help young girls in the community especially during her duty as Head of the Family Support Unit in Lungi. She helped so many families bridging the gap and with her no nonsense stance the girls are nickname "Nor near Inspector M'Balu in pikin o" meaning Don't get close to Inspector M'balu Children, with her discipline stance she is known in most part of the township.

Inspector Haja M'Balu Mansaray is the President for the Kaffu Bullom Voice of Islam Women's Wing an Islamic group which comprise of 8 sections in Kaffu Bullom Chiefdom Lungi. The group has over 200 memberships of elderly women in Lungi and this is an added advantage to mobilized young pupils to groom them with Islamic ethics.

THREATS

The Lungi Township is well popular with both good and bad things especially amongst girls as it is the entry and leaving point in the country, it housed the Airport with so many Hotels and lots of Tourists.



CHALLENGES



The school is in dire need of meeting up its challenges

1. To maintain the Teachers of the school by given them their stipends so that they will give up their best in inculcating Islamic ethics on the Kids so that when they grow up they will not

depart from the remembrance of Allah and be a good citizens of the country.

- 2. To extend the School building by building other classrooms that will accommodate pupils that will graduate to Nursery 3 and Primary School.**
- 3. To have a School Bus system that will help pupils to be in school at all times.**
- 4. That the school will help in providing food for the kids in school so that it will help them grow in the poor community we found ourselves.**

OUTCOME

Considering the fact that Islamic nursery schools have dual roles to play, it becomes essential to marry and mend both Islamic and western systems of education for fruitful result. Islamizing the curriculum of Islamic nursery schools becomes imperative for them to function well in the two realms. Through this, all the learning experiences the pupils are exposed to in the school become God-centered as against Western curriculum which is tailored along achieving material wealth of this life alone with no consideration for the here-after.

Thus, there is serious and urgent need for Muslim intellectuals and academics from various disciplines to collectively and individually rise to the task of writing texts on their areas of specialization from the perspective of their religion. This demands combined efforts of scholars of Islamic and Muslim scholars in other areas of disciplines. On the other hand, our schools need to be employing competent Muslim teachers to take care of the young ones. These teachers must be sponsored to attend various workshops, seminars and lectures on Islamization of knowledge for them to be well- equipped and face the challenges before them.

CONCLUSION

Parents should put in their best efforts to ensure that their children become true inheritors of Islam, and to keep Islam alive in their lives and their families' lives after their death. Parental efforts are, therefore, quite instrumental in inculcating the love of Islam and the desire to worship in the right manner. Parents should also recognize that raising good children can be a source of their salvation in the hereafter. This is because if parents raise good Allah-fearing children, those

children can constantly pray to Allah for their parents after their death. The Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said:

“Upon death, man’s deeds will stop except for three deeds, namely: a continuous charitable fund, endowment or goodwill; knowledge left for people to benefit from; and a pious righteous and God-fearing child who continuously prays to Allah, for the souls of his parents” (Muslim).

Finally, let’s not forget that fulfilling the rights of the individuals prescribed by Allah is part of the limits set by Allah that should be taken seriously. Allah states thus in the Quran:

And treat not the Verses (Laws) of Allah as a jest, but remember Allah’s favors on you (i.e. Islam), and that which He has sent down to you of the Book (i.e. the Qur’an) and Al-Hikmah (the Prophet’s Sunnah – legal ways – Islamic jurisprudence) whereby He instructs you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is all-aware of everything Quran (2:231).