

## **International Non-Profit Organization of Albukhary Foundation**

FaizOsman<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Zemy<sup>2</sup>, JamilZaifaniJa' Amin<sup>3</sup>,Azizan Nordin<sup>4</sup>

*Corresponding Author: MohamadFaiz Bin Osman*

*Students of Master of Management, Faculty of Management and Information System,  
Sultan Azlan Shah University, Kuala Kangsar, Perak, Malaysia*

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**ABSTRACT:** *Albukhary Foundation which was founded on the Islamic values of faith (Taqwa) and compassion (Ehsan) is an international non-profit charitable organization headquartered in Malaysia. The foundation does not discriminate on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin and religion since it is founded on Islamic values. Albukhary Foundation founded the Albukhary International University (AIU), The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world and The Albukhary Foundation Flagship Programs (Albukhary Scholarship Program, Albukhary Tuition Program, Hajj Pilgrimage Program, Khidmat Van Jenazah Albukhary Care, Turkey Albukhary Culture and Language Camp 2016 and Language & Management Trainee Program (LAMT)). By doing all of these programs, the foundation can achieve its objectives which are to encourage the Islamic brotherhood and help the others in need as well as promoting understanding between civilizations.*

**KEY WORD:** *Albukhary Foundation, Albukhary International University (AIU), Hajj Pilgrimage Program*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Albukhary Foundation which was established in 1996 was conceived from the idea of the prominent businessman and a well-known philanthropist i.e. Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Albukhary whom past childhood experience leads to the establishment of the foundation. Despite Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Albukhary being the richest Malay businessman in Malaysia today, his past experience of poverty gave him the understanding for the hardship of the poor and the needy people in the society.

The Albukhary Foundation translates the founder's gratitude to Allah S.W.T for all the blessings and fortune that he has all this while. The beginning of Albukhary Foundation's journey started on one simple act of kindness that took place four decades ago. When Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar brought home his first salary of RM1,500 as a rice trader in 1974, his mother, Sharifah Rokiah reminded him that while they lived a humble life, there were other people in the community who were poorer (Albukhary Foundation, 2018). She encouraged him to keep half for the family, and distribute the remaining RM750 to 15 needy families in their community (Albukhary Foundation, 2018). According to the founder, his foundation is an Islamic social responsibility which is purely based on Taqwa and Ehsan values, not based on the western concept of corporate social responsibility. Other Muslim businesses and companies can emulate from the concept.

The foundation objectives were to provide assistance and guidance to the poor and underprivileged whether they are in the country or from other countries regardless of their beliefs. The gap between the poor and the rich, the privilege and the underprivileged is so wide currently and something needs to be done to reduce the Gaps. He hopes that by establishing the foundation, it will somehow help at a certain extent to reduce the gap whether within the country and internationally. He hopes that if his foundation is a success, other establishment businessman and company will follow suit to close the gap as the benefits that can be reaped is greatly beneficial to the human beings. Sustainable countries can ensure that the human beings will respect each other and will live in peace and there will be no war or havoc in a certain region.

It is a noble practice in Islam in general to emulate a good example as mentioned in the holy Quran that good example is indeed in the messenger of Allah to be followed as Allah S.W.T says: "Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much" (Quran, 33: 21). Therefore, by citing the foundation, as exemplary model of the concept of Islamic social responsibility to be emulated, will not be baseless. The foundation is really focusing on social responsibilities which ranged from having good education and welfare, good health and suitable environment to cherishing of Islamic/Malay heritage. To fulfill these responsibilities, the foundation has spent more than 1.6 billion for different projects in more than 50 countries.

## **II. ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (AIU)**

Albukhary International University (AIU) which was situated in AlorSetar, Kedah was founded with the aim of inclusion in the field of higher education. The Albukhary International University (AIU) which was built on the premise that no one should be deprived of an education, is unique in that it provides talented, driven yet financially constrained individuals from minority countries with an opportunity to pursue higher education, in hopes that this opportunity will allow the Scholars to redefine their future. Alongside the other entities within the complex, the campus layout serve as a reminder that while the pursuit of knowledge is paramount to progress, education is only valuable when it is holistic.

More importantly the values implanted in Albukhary Scholars are distinct, in that the University aims to shape individuals who are intellectually capable, compassionate, humble, adaptable and strives to improve the state of humanity besides seeks to offer a holistic scholastic educational experience. An outcome that encourages individuals to reach out to others and give back to the community translated from the founder's thoughtfulness when planning the campus.

Each entity serves as a constant reminder and has its purpose to reach out to others in the community. This amazing setup of the SharifahRokiah Centre of Excellence is the brainchild of the Founder, Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar, and is complemented with Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar's 8-hour rule: "The day has twenty four hours; eight for the night's sleep, eight for the day's education, and eight for helping others in need" (Albukhary Foundation, 2018).

## **III. THE ALBUKHARY FOUNDATION GALLERY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD**

The British Museum's Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World which was manifested in 2018 was made possible thanks to a generous donation from the Albukhary Foundation and its chairman, Tan Sri Syed MokhtarAlbukhary who is also the Director of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

An exciting new vision, displayed across two magnificent refurbished galleries at the heart of the British Museum was represented by The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World. A broad spectrum of the material culture produced from the seventh century to the present day in the Islamic world, a series of regions stretching from West Africa to Southeast Asia was comprised by The British Museum's Islamic collection. From archaeological material to contemporary art, from the paintings and vessels made for royal patrons to the reminiscent objects of daily life, this gallery brings together the stories of interconnected worlds across time and geography.

A permanent presence for light-sensitive objects such as works on paper and textiles was accommodated by the gallery, which will be regularly changed. The British Museum and Albukhary Foundation stand together in a time of increasing intolerance and persistent ignorance, to exchange knowledge, expertise and share art in efforts to foster a deeper appreciation of Islamic Arts, history and culture.

**Figure 1:British Museum Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World**



*Source: British Museum*

#### **IV. ALBUKHARY FOUNDATION FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS**

Albukhary Foundation was established to help the poor, supported the development of Islamic art and culture as well as promoting understanding between civilizations. The foundation comprises of two parts. One part, the exercise of charity works while the other part manages the distribution of funds from every company in which the founder has interest in. There are great programs that run in Albukhary Foundation which are Albukhary Scholarship Program, Albukhary Tuition Program, Hajj Pilgrimage Program, Khidmat Van Jenazah, Albukhary Care, Turkey Albukhary Culture and Language Camp 2016 and Language & Management Trainee Program (LAMT). Details about the said programs are presented next.

##### **Albukhary Scholarship Program**

Progressive leadership development in some Muslim countries is bottlenecked by the lack of quality tertiary education and the deteriorating state of poverty that some of the Muslim communities in those countries wallow in. It is against this backdrop that Albukhary Foundation, in 2005, with a mission to attenuate these challenges, setup a scholarship program that provides brilliant high school students with qualitative tertiary education that equips them with the necessary skills to become a responsible future leaders who will contribute towards the betterment of their respective countries.

This program has given students the scholarships to study at Albukhary International University or in other universities (mainly government and private universities in Malaysia). This scholarship program has benefitted more than 800 students from fifty countries, spanning countries in the far east of Africa to countries in the Asian continent. These trained international students constitute 70 percent of the beneficiaries of the Foundation's scholarship program while the rest are comprised of Malaysians. Furthermore, 90 percent of the total beneficiaries are Muslims and the rest are non-Muslims.

This program is one example of the founder's noble initiatives to help those who cannot offer to pay for tuition fee. It is a noble objective to embarking on the educational emancipation, especially Muslims who lack the financial means, that resonates with the Islamic ethics, which consequently influences the corporate social responsibility of a Foundation like Albukhary.

##### **Albukhary Tuition Program**

With similar objective, to the previous program, in tackling educational challenges for underprivileged individuals, this program is focusing on Malaysian school students. It was initiated to avoid future social problems that may face those who are not doing well in school. The declining number of secondary school students, from poor rural backgrounds, passing their final year examinations, has initiated collaboration with the Ministry of Education to form the Albukhary Tuition Program. Specifically designed to accommodate students described as 'underachievers' or 'borderline' in the English, Mathematics and Science subjects, the tuition program aims to particularly educate, motivate and tap into students full potential through remedial classes held daily after school. The exponential success seen through the years 2001 to 2009 has led to a rapid network of 500 tuition centers that educates and benefits over 80,000 students spanning across the country.

##### **Hajj Pilgrimage Program**

Launched in 1996, the Hajj Pilgrimage program is among the earliest initiatives of Albukhary Foundation. It collaborated with Pilgrims Fund Board of Malaysia, the Prime Minister's Department, Muslim Welfare Organization of Malaysia and Orang Asli Affair Department, with the mission to sponsor underprivileged Muslims to perform the religious Hajj Pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia. As of 2015, 897 people have benefited from this program.

##### **Khidmat Van Jenazah, Albukhary Care**

The launch of the first stage started in Kedah state as a scheme of funeral van services for Malaysians who are in need (whether they live in urban and rural areas) and especially for those who are unable to afford the cost. Both young and old citizens are available for this scheme. Such scheme was necessary as this kind of services is costly. This scheme targeted those who have migrated to the state, federal or capital city for better economic opportunity and have since taken up residence. It also emphasized on underprivileged urban areas with large focus of local migrants largely in state capital. It meant to fulfill the request of the dead people to be sent back to their hometown throughout Peninsular Malaysia. As of 2017, the scheme is available in seven different mosques in the following states: Kedah, Penang, Perak, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, and Johor in addition to three mosques in Kuala Lumpur (with one van for each of the mosque). Since the launched of this scheme, the foundation already catered more than 600 Muslims.

**Figure 2:Khidmat Van JenazahAlbukhary Care**



*Source: Malaysia Dateline*

### **Turkey Albukhary Culture and Language Camp 2016**

Turkey Albukhary Culture and Language Camp 2016 (TALC Camp 2016) was initiated and sponsored personally by the founder to strengthen the existing good relationship between Malaysia and Turkey. TALC2016 was a short course hosted at Albukhary International University in Alor Star/Kedah which emphasized on English Language proficiency. The foundation welcomed 204 talented and prudently selected Turkish students whom had displayed either great academic achievements or through certified recommendations. Many of them are seen as future leaders of Turkey through their involvement in activities at their respective institutions both inside and outside the classroom.

The course consisted of an intensive Academic English Course of 30 hours per week in form of classes which was accompanied by an extra program on cultural exchange between Malaysia and Turkey. The course was designed to accommodate four separate competency levels such as elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper intermediate. The English language content for each level was designed to provide structured and progressive development in all skills, namely reading, listening, writing and speaking. To develop greater fluency and accuracy in the productive skills of speaking and writing, IELTS framework syllabus was adopted with the inclusion of specific tasks throughout the course relating to topics on the culture similarities and differences between Malaysia and Turkey. Weekly individual and group presentations were linked to their weekend activities. This enabled them to relate their vocabularies to real life experiences, consequently enhanced their confidence.

### **Language & Management Trainee Program (LAMT)**

The LAMT program was jointly sponsored by three main parties: TÜRGEV, Albukhary Foundation and MENTAL HR Consultancy. LAMT was an international skills enhancement program that emphasized on English language proficiency and career readiness. The program was further combined with professional skills in business management, talent development and application of information technology at the workplace in order to boost employability. The program was held in Albukhary International University, Kedah, Malaysia.

Upon completion of the program, career opportunities were offered based on eligibility and possible. Enrolling in this program did not required specific qualifications. However the priority were given to young applicants, below the age of 30 years old, and who interested to get the announced career by the Turkish company, i.e. Mental HR Consultancy (Mental HR consultancy is an Istanbul based firm that runs personnel selection, placement, employee evaluation, performance management and talent development).

## **V. CONCLUSION**

The concept of brotherhood and social justice give rise to social responsibility and makes Muslims responsible to each other. The main objective of Islamic social responsibility is to promote social justice (A'del) which results in attainment of Al-Falah (success in this life and in Hereafter). The concept of brotherhood



substantiates that Muslim to be considerate, compassion, and kind (Ehsan) to other fellow brother in facing financial difficulty.

The Albukhary Foundation is a practical example of implementing good Islamic corporate social responsibility. Though the founder is one of the richest Malaysian entrepreneurs, he lived in a deprived childhood. The house that he lived did not have a bed, table or chair. Experiencing that kind of difficulty gave him additional motivation in helping others with the hope of “making a difference” in people’s life.

The founder said: “My mother taught us that we do not have anything until we gave him with a vengeance, hoping it will make other people's lives for the better” (Al-Hasan Al-Aidaros, 2018). He also said: “The lesson for me is that we must always remember our roots, where we came from, and humble when blessed with good luck. If not, we may fall” (Al-Hasan Al-Aidaros, 2018). This is in addition to his Islamic motivation in making all programs for the sake of Allah S.W.T regardless of people’s expectations or rewards. In summary, the objective of Islamic social responsibility is to achieve happiness and success in this world and Hereafter (i.e. Al-Falah). Islam improve the standards of living of the community so as to enjoins the removal of hardship.

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