



Executive summary

This report presents the strategic plan of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) for the years 2010 to 2020. The plan details our goals for the next 10 years, the strategies we can use to achieve these goals, and highlights some measurable objectives.

Through this plan we hope to transform ICNA into an effective grass-roots Islamic movement of committed and diverse membership. The plan aims for the betterment of society through self development, education, outreach and social services. We believe that we can achieve this vision by *becoming relevant to the society at large, deepening our roots in the Muslim community, strengthening and streamlining our organization and developing knowledgeable and active individuals who can effectively represent Islam in the society.*

As stated in our by-laws, the Qur'an and the Sunnah will be our primary source of guidance. ICNA will never utilize means that may violate the Islamic principles. In accordance with Islamic principles, it will utilize only democratic, legal and peaceful means to achieve its goals.

This is only an outline of our vision and thought process. The details of cost and human resources required to implement this vision from national to unit level need to be determined. We suggest a similar initiative be carried out for other divisions of ICNA. This includes and is not limited to ICNA Relief and YM drafting their own, respective, 10-year strategic plans.

Preface

Alhamdulillah, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) has just completed four decades of existence. It was initially formed, as *Halaqa Ahabab-e-Islami*, on September 1, 1969, and since then, despite some of the ups and downs, ICNA has achieved steady progress as an Islamic movement conveying the message of Islam to the citizens of North America. Each of the last four decades can easily be labeled as: 1) Formation and Transformation; 2) Foundation and Expansion; 3) Growth and Growing Pain; and 4) Conflict and Resolution.

At the outset of the fifth decade, ICNA is considered one of the main national Islamic organizations, working in the fields of dawah, social services and youth, with a strong team of dedicated and committed volunteers in major metropolitan areas of the US. Its national and two regional conventions attract almost 15,000 Muslims every year. About 60,000 Muslims from forty states participated in the Muslim Family Day (MFD) celebrations at Six Flags locations in nine cities this year. Some of the ICNA divisions, departments and units were also able to launch several major initiatives in the fields of Dawah (outreach) and Tarbiyah (education).

The backbone workforce of the organization remained the brothers and sisters from South Asia, especially from Pakistan, who were affiliated with the Islamic movement and its various entities in the subcontinent. This is strength of ICNA, but at the same time it reveals that ICNA lacks diversity in its membership. While ICNA Sisters' Wing has been working in a very organized and systematic way and their work is a hidden treasure of ICNA, it still attracts mostly Urdu-speaking sisters.

By the Grace of Allah SWT, ICNA has the potential to become the leading Islamic organization in the US. It has an efficient infrastructure, clarity of mission, valuable experience and a dedicated workforce. The diverse American Muslim community also presents tremendous opportunities for ICNA's growth. American Muslims are young educated professionals and more financially stable than average American citizens. The Muslim community, especially the youth, are becoming more active. The recent PEW study also proved that the two characteristics of ICNA's dawah work--developing personal contacts with and conveying the last Divine Message to fellow citizens--are helpful in creating a positive image of Islam and Muslims among the American public.

There is a strong need to chalk out the future discourse in a planned way. ICNA's growth model lacked a long-term vision and a strategic plan. For the last several years, with some exception, we have been working with ad-hoc annual plans. The present report is a daring exercise to fill that gap. The 10-year strategic plan, prepared by the ICNA Vision 2020 Committee, will, inshaAllah, connect the dots. It will help us move to the next level during the fifth decade of ICNA in a more coherent and effective manner. Let's combine our efforts and prayers to navigate successfully through the coming decade.

Strategic Planning Process

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَلْيَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“Believers fear Allah and let every person look to what he sends forward for the morrow. Fear Allah; Allah is well aware of all that you do” (59:18)

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategic direction. It involves making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. Strategic planning is a formal consideration towards an organization's future course and deals with at least one of three key questions:

1. *What we do?*
2. *For whom we do it for?*
3. *How do we excel?*

In certain organizations this is viewed as a process for determining an organization's direction for the next 3 to 5 years. However, in some exceptional cases this vision may be extended to 20 years. In order to assess an organization's direction we must first determine where the entity presently stands. We then articulate its course and how it should arrive at its desired destination. We name a plan carrying such details as the "strategic plan."

The ICNA Vision 2020 Planning Committee was established in February 2009 by the ICNA National Shura (Board). The committee members have several brainstorming sessions via conference calls and physical meetings towards formalizing ICNA's Strategic Plan. After reviewing several planning methodologies, the committee decided to adopt *Dr. Rafik Beekun's* book, *Strategic Planning and Implementation for Muslim Organizations*, as its guide. After reviewing the present state of ICNA, a vision statement to meet the organization's goals and mission was developed and a plan for the year 2020 was formulated to accomplish these key goals.

The committee reviewed various planning documents of ICNA and other Muslim organizations, both local and based abroad. The strategic plan was formalized after gathering feedback received from a group discussion at the annual *General Assembly Meeting 2009*. Valuable input was also received from *ICNA's 2003-04 planning report*, as well as the *ICNA Shura Retreat of 2006*. During the *ICNA-MAS Convention 2009*, the planning committee members interviewed various visiting scholars and gathered their suggestions. These valuable suggestions were also taken into consideration while working towards this plan.

The committee felt that most of the aims defined in the previous planning documents were well thought out and very much in line with the current plan. This gives us confidence about continuity in ICNA leadership's thought process, vision and

priorities. This strategic plan is an effort to further streamline ICNA's vision so that it is presented and followed in a more systematic manner.

The committee hopes that this effort will make the organization capable of meeting any future challenges in the coming years. We would like to thank Dr. Zahid Bukhari, Br. Naeem Baig, Br. Tariqur Rehman and representatives from ICNA Sisters' Wing for their participation and valuable suggestions.

Mahmood Aijazi, Committee Chair

Members

Salman Aqeel

Javaid Siddiqui

Adnan Tafseer

Waqas Ahmed

Farhan Pervez

Mohammad Ilyas

What Do We Want to Achieve?

The Mission Statement

Transform ICNA into an effective grass-roots Islamic movement of committed and diverse membership working for the betterment of society through self development, education, outreach and social services. (Adopted from Shura Retreat 2006)

Strategic Goals

1. Developing knowledgeable and active individuals who can effectively represent Islam in society
2. Strengthening and streamlining our organization
3. Becoming relevant to society at large
4. Deepening our roots in the Muslim community

Value Statement (from By-laws)

1. The Qur'an and the Sunnah shall be the primary source of guidance.
2. ICNA shall never utilize means that violate the Islamic principles to attain its goal.
3. To attain its goal, ICNA shall utilize only democratic, legal and peaceful means according to the Islamic principles.
4. ICNA shall disseminate the message of Islam, provide intellectual and moral training to build Islamic character and conduct and educate the public to achieve its goal.

What Must We Do to Get There?

To achieve our strategic goals, we will pursue the strategies outlined below.

Strategic Goal 1: We Will Develop Knowledgeable and Active Individuals Who Can Effectively Represent Islam in Society

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ

وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“He it is Who has raised a Messenger among the gentiles' from among themselves, who recites to them His Revelations, purifies them and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, whereas before this they were indeed lost in manifest error.” (62:2)

Strategic Overview:

The most important asset for any organization is its human resources. ICNA, being a grass-roots organization must pay very close attention to the development these human resources. The future of Dawah in this society is directly linked with the ability of ICNA's membership to communicate the message of Islam to the society at large. Developing a membership which can inspire, propose and appeal to an increasingly sophisticated and intellectual audience is very challenging. Adapting and excelling in the new era of fast paced and an ever changing society is a challenge in itself.

To confront these challenges and keep ICNA at the forefront of this message, ICNA's leadership must pay close attention to the development of its membership--a membership which would not only excel in its Islamic knowledge, but would also be able to effectively communicate this message. This is a tremendous challenge, but something that can be achieved with the help of Allah (SWT) and proper planning and implementation. Leadership in the 21st century will be challenging and will require individuals that are able to internalize the message of Islam and its core values while simultaneously being able to exercise and articulate this message in a professional and attractive manner to a sophisticated and intellectual audience.

Specific Strategies for Goal 1:

- I. Developing Islamic contents in all forms with the theme of Islam as a complete way of life
- II. Providing Islamic knowledge with movement orientation to general Muslim community, especially to Muslim youth.
- III. Offering educational and training opportunities to increase Islamic knowledge, to enhance character and to develop skills for ICNA members
- IV. Preparing knowledgeable and effective leadership for ICNA, its different entities and general American Muslim community
- V. Making Neighbor Nets as a centerpiece of ICNA grassroots activities for knowledge, skills and character development

Strategic Goal 2: We Will Strengthen and Streamline our Organization

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And from among you there must be a party who invite people to all that is good and enjoin the doing of all that is right and forbid the doing of all that is wrong. It is they who will attain true success.” (3:104)

Strategic Overview:

As ICNA enters its fifth decade of service, it is vital that the structure and internal processes of the organization are evaluated and re-aligned with its vision and goals. The ability and effectiveness of any organization in the 21st century largely depends on its core values, clarity of mission and vision and streamlined structure and communication among various internal groups and teams. ICNA's organizational structure continues to evolve, and it is critical that ICNA's leadership adopts a strategic view of the organization and its future to ensure proper alignment with new challenges, scope and direction.

Over the next decade ICNA will be entering a new era; this requires a deep evaluation of the organization's structure, processes, communication and leadership role. A close look at the opportunities and challenges accompanied by a critical view of the past can help the organization pave the way to the future. The practice of "continuous improvement and development" through the process of continuous evaluation and streamlining internal processes and structure is critical to the success of ICNA. Using emerging technologies, removing confusing organizational structures and creating

repeatable clear processes and communication channels can go a long way in strengthening an organization's core and bringing its membership closer.

Specific Strategies for Goal 2:

- I. Standardizing the organizational structure, concepts and terminology at all levels of ICNA, while retaining compatibility with the society at large
- II. Promoting the family as a centerpiece of our activities
- III. Empowering the next generation by granting leadership roles in the organization
- IV. Diversifying ICNA's membership by fostering a culture that is readily acceptable among the general masses
- V. Establishing an atmosphere that enhances cohesiveness and coordination across ICNA entities
- VI. Adopting measures for long term and short term financial stability
- VII. Building a central infrastructure that serves as a repository for all ICNA records utilizing emerging technologies
- VIII. Increasing the frequency of regional conventions
- IX. Developing a plan that amplifies current attendance figures in national and regional conventions

Strategic Goal 3: We Will Become Relevant to Society at Large

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

“O Prophet invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition and discuss things with people in the best manner”

Strategic Overview:

The challenges and moral dilemmas facing Muslim communities in America require an understanding of the shifts in ideological, social, religious and political forces that are shaping the structure and foundation of American society. The challenge facing the Muslim communities is to not only to maintain its Islamic identity, but also to initiate change in the social and political spheres in light of the principles of the noble Qur'an.

To achieve these goals requires active participation of Muslims in the political, social, economic and religious aspects of society. Failing this, Muslims will either be segregated or assimilated. Both options are undesirable as they lead to the loss of self-

identity, which is built on religious and social values acquired from one's family and strengthened through constant interaction with the larger society.

Islam has much to offer to the ongoing debate on the future and status of the family and other issues in this society such as social justice, homelessness, etc. The practical implications of the answers found in the Qur'an for those who advocate stability of the family and society are immense. There is no question that there should be a correct analysis of our environment, and specific and strategic planning is vital for the future of the Muslim community as well as that of ICNA.

Specific Strategies for Goal 3:

- I. Presenting Islamic perspective on issues related to the society
- II. Addressing the emerging trends of Islamophobia in media and other forums
- III. Working together with like minded faith-based and civic organizations
- IV. Giving non-Muslims a sense of participation in ICNA
- V. Educating and mobilizing the Muslim community to participate in issues related to the society
- VI. Making effective presentation of ICNA activities to the society at large
- VII. Moving to the next level of Dawah, aimed towards the movers and shakers of the society
- VIII. Making outreach efforts to minorities particularly the Hispanic population
- IX. Developing relationship with dawah organizations
- X. Expanding ICNA Dawah activities

Strategic Goal 4: We Will Deepen our Roots in the Muslim Community

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

"Do you not see to what Allah' has likened the 'Pure Word'? It is like a good tree which has got deep roots into the earth and whose branches have spread high up into heaven." (14:24)

Strategic Overview:

The American Muslim community is the most diverse Muslim community in the world. On one hand, this diversity creates unmatched opportunity; on the other hand it creates unique challenges. Muslim immigrants from around the world are learning how to co-exist with American reverts. The landscape is full of a large number of Muslim organizations who are trying to establish themselves based on ethnicity, culture, professional backgrounds and religious affiliations.

A key measure of success for ICNA would be its ability to reach out to the larger Muslim community and to assist in setting the direction that will ultimately result in a planned road map for change. This, however, can only be accomplished with the organization further strengthening its presence in the American Muslim community. To gain a leadership role and wider acceptance in a diverse community is an initial challenge being faced by every Muslim organization. This demands a comprehensive understanding of trends, aspirations and dynamics attributed to the larger community.

Specific Strategies for Goal 4:

- I. Promoting ICNA as an American Muslim grassroots organization with clear agenda and services for youth, family and community
- II. Providing guidance to every day matters and Fiqhi issues to the American Muslim community
- III. Strengthening partnerships with Islamic Centers/Masajid, Islamic schools and Shura Councils of various cities
- IV. Organizing and assembling community activists to assist ICNA in grassroots initiatives
- V. Forming alliances with other national, regional and ethnic Muslim organizations
- VI. Presenting ICNA activities through the emerging Muslim ethnic media

How Will We Know We Have Succeeded?

Strategic Goal 1: We Will Develop Knowledgeable and Active Individuals Who Can Effectively Represent Islam in Society

Specific Strategies for Goal 1:

- I. Offering educational and training opportunities to increase Islamic knowledge, to enhance character and to develop skills for ICNA members
- II. Providing Islamic knowledge with movement orientation to general Muslim community, especially to Muslim youth.
- III. Preparing knowledgeable and effective leadership for ICNA, its different entities and general American Muslim community
- IV. Making Neighbor Nets as a centerpiece of ICNA grassroots activities for knowledge, skills and character development
- V. Developing Islamic contents in all forms with the theme of Islam as a complete way of life

Specific Objectives for Strategies of Goal 1:

1. Reorganize ILF as a national entity of ICNA for education, knowledge and personal development
2. Sponsor ICNA youth for higher Islamic education to produce Islamic scholars. Develop selection process and budget by ILF, and HQ
3. Standardize procedures and core curriculum for MGAs, applicant MGAs and members, including Sisters Wing and YM and also develop a detailed plan for the Neighbor Net
4. Provide summer internship to at least 30 youth every year under various ICNA entities and reach a goal of 70 - 80 youth by 2020
5. Establish a committee for content and literature development (including multimedia)
6. Develop a team of 15 people as trainer, including sisters, trained in Islamic management and other required professional skills within two years
7. Establish The Message Publications to publish literature

Strategic Goal 2: We Will Strengthening and Streamlining Our Organization

Specific Strategies for Goal 2:

- I. Standardizing the organizational structure, concepts and terminology at all levels of ICNA, while retaining compatibility with the society at large
- II. Empowering the next generation by granting leadership roles in the organization
- III. Diversifying ICNA's membership by fostering a culture that is readily acceptable among the general masses
- IV. Adopting measures for long term and short term financial stability
- V. Promoting the family as a centerpiece of our activities
- VI. Establishing an atmosphere that enhances cohesiveness and coordination across ICNA entities
- VII. Building a central infrastructure that serves as a repository for all ICNA records utilizing emerging technologies
- VIII. Increasing the frequency of regional conventions
- IX. Developing a plan that amplifies current attendance figures in national and regional conventions

Specific Objectives for Strategies of Goal 2:

1. Establish in 10 major units their office/center/masjid by 2015
2. Establish State level ICNA structure with new terminology (Circle >> Chapter >> State >> National) in five states by 2012, five more states by 2016, and five more by 2020
3. Overview and plan in detail YM Brothers and YM Sisters within a year, facilitate YM to establish their Neighbor Nets in 10 more cities in five years, and establish YM Alumni
4. Define the process of establishing and running "Neighbor Net," Circle and Chapter
5. Establish chapters in all 31 metropolitan areas with a population of over 2 million by 2020 (14 metropolitan areas already have ICNA chapters)
6. Establish a National Membership department and achieving 50,000 members by 2020
7. Establish MCNA in all chapters within five years
8. Increase the number of monthly donors to 500 by 2011
9. Change CBL and modifying terminology to be compatible with the society at large within a year.
10. Establish ICNA Endowment Fund. Plan to reach an endowment goal of \$1 Million by 2015
11. Establish a National Convention department and organize three more regional/state conventions by 2015

12. Organize strategic discussions between ICNA Shura and Sisters' Wing's leadership for the future of ICNA work among women
13. Achieve at least 5% diversity in our membership within five years
14. Enhance & continuously update the ICNA website and establish a secure ICNA portal for internal use
15. Achieve 10% increase in MGAs and workers annually. By 2020 their number should be 1200 and 6000, respectively
16. Organize at least two main events/camps jointly with Sisters' Wing at regional and major units' level annually
17. Establish a coordination committee representing all ICNA entities for sharing resources and standardization of HR Management
18. Establish an ICNA History committee
19. Renovate and expand the ICNA HQ building by 2011
20. Start holding annual ICNA fundraising dinner in all chapters by 2014

Strategic goal 3: We Will Become Relevant to Society at Large

Specific Strategies for Goal 3:

- I. Presenting Islamic perspective on issues related to the society
- II. Addressing the emerging trends of Islamophobia in media and other forums
- III. Working together with like minded faith-based and civic organizations
- IV. Giving non-Muslims a sense of participation in ICNA
- V. Educating and mobilizing the Muslim community to participate in issues related to the society
- VI. Making effective presentation of ICNA activities to the society at large
- VII. Moving to the next level of Dawah, aimed towards the movers and shakers of the society
- VIII. Making outreach efforts to minorities particularly the Hispanic population
- IX. Developing relationship with dawah organizations
- X. Expanding ICNA Dawah activities

Specific Objectives for Strategies of Goal 3:

1. Establish an effective media department
2. Organize annual national campaigns on different issues related to society
3. Promote Council for Social Justice and its activities
4. Appoint a full time Hispanic Outreach Director

5. Create a new type of membership for fellow citizens of other faiths called: Friends of ICNA
6. Prepare a team of Dae'es in all regions and units by 2015
7. Built Coalition among social service organizations by ICNA Relief
8. Review/Revise terminology used by the organization in CBL and all official communication by the end of 2010.
9. Establish Interfaith Relations Committee
10. Establish and enhance the present Dawah project in all chapters

Strategic Goal 4: We Will Deepen Our Roots in the Muslim Community

Specific Strategies for Goal 4:

- I. Promoting ICNA as an American Muslim grassroots organization with clear agenda and services for youth, family and community
- II. Providing guidance to every day matters and Fiqhi issues to the American Muslim community
- III. Strengthening partnerships with Islamic Centers/Masajid, Islamic Schools and Shura Councils of various cities
- IV. Organizing and assembling community activists to assist ICNA in grassroots initiatives
- V. Forming alliances with other national, regional and ethnic Muslim organizations
- VI. Presenting ICNA activities through the emerging Muslim ethnic media

Specific Objectives for Strategies of Goal 4:

1. Establish Muslim Family Services in 10 cities as a project of ICNA Relief by 2020
2. Establish and enhance the work of ICNA Shariah Council by organizing annual seminars
3. Establish professional forums for doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, communication personals, journalists, IT professionals, Educators and public policy experts
4. Print and promote ICNA's magazine The Message on large scale
5. Establish an office for Islamic Center/Masajid Outreach
6. Work for the Unity Convention (during the Presidential election year in 2012)
7. Establish an online Islamic educational resource center by 2020
8. Establish ICNA Relief in all chapters by 2015.